

THE
PRINCE OF LEON.

A SPANISH ROMANCE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY MRS. HARLEY,

AUTHOR OF

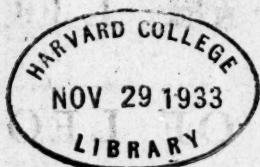
JULIANA ORMESTON, &c.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. BARKER, RUSSELL COURT,
DRURY LANE. 1794.

17436.37.80



Greenough fund

W

THE
PRINCE OF LEON.

A SPANISH ROMANCE.

AWED by the firm voice and majestic deportment of the countess, they followed in silence. They entered by the same door through which Leonora had once fled from the power of De Carma. Before the altar of white marble burnt a silver lamp, which diffused a splendid light through the subterranean abode. Impressed by an unknown emotion, Leonora fell on her knees before the statue, and raised her mild eyes, beaming pleasure and secret delight, to heaven. Almeria

raised her from the ground, and tenderly embraced her; rise, cried she, amiable child, rise to the embrace of a fond mother, who thus tenderly welcomes the noble heiress of the great Mendoza! Behold that image, such was the great Alphonso, and such is our valiant Carlos. Ours I call him, for surely we may claim a little portion in his love; but ah, my Leonora, canst thou now wonder at my apprehensions, canst thou divest thyself of those tender sentiments which gave them birth, and think on Carlos only as thy king! He is thy king! He is the noble heir of good Alphonso; and the murderers of his father shall shrink before him. This night, guided by our friends, thou shalt seek an abode of safety, whilst I, to-morrow, before the assembled army, proclaim the rights of great Alphonso's son.

Ah, madam, sighed Leonora, to what danger are you going to expose yourself? Why should I fly and leave you to cer-
tain

tain misery——Almeria interrupted her; the first proof I exact of your duty, said she, is implicit obedience; follow this good, this venerable man, and his friendship and the attentions of Donna Victoria, will compensate for a temporary absence from me; should any misfortune happen to me, I commit you to the care of my king, if he from gratitude to the house of Mendoza, joined to his once ardent love, still wishes to raise its heiress to his throne; I release you from my prohibition, and allow you to accept him; but should royalty change the ideas of Don Carlos, remember who thou art, and let him find Leonora inherits the virtues of her father, and the fortitude of her mother; one more embrace.

As they embraced, a violent noise was heard without, and Don Pedro, pale and wounded, rushed in, and staggering, fell at the feet of the marble altar; all is lost, cried he: the false usurper, taking advan-

tage of the truce, has broke into the castle, dispersed our weak battalions, and is rushing hither; in vain have I endeavoured to oppose him.

As he finished, De Carma, followed by a party of soldiers, rushed into the subterranean, he saw the enemy he pursued, fallen and almost senseless, between the good old monk and Victoria, who were endeavouring to raise him. Leonora leant on her mother's shoulder, petrified with terror. Gonsalvez was transported at beholding the object of his pursuit, thus defenceless and abandoned; thou art again mine, exclaimed he, with exultation, prepare to receive my passion, or force awaits thee. As he spoke, he advanced towards them, and stretched forth his hand to seize the hapless Leonora; but Almeria, roused to madness by the insult, felt all the mother rise within her, and swift as lightening catching the dagger from the altar, plunged it into the bosom of
De

De Carma; die murderer, cried she, die by the dagger, with which thy hand imbrued itself in royal blood. De Carma fell, gave a deep groan and expired; his soldiers fled, aghast, to inform the king, and Almeria made her friends take the advantage of the moment, and retire by a secret opening, hid behind the altar; Victoria and Leonora assisted Don Pedro, who was a little recovered, and thus conveyed him from the rage of his enemies.

Sancho meantime informed of the catastrophe, rushed on with impetuous fury, he beheld the Countess with the bloody dagger, yet reeking in her hand; but a greater subject of terror, was the figure of Alphonso: he gazed, the sword dropped from his nerveless hand, his hair stiffened with horror, and looking on Almeria, faintly articulated, what hast thou done?

A 5

A deed

A deed of glory, replied she, with animation; a deed by which a mother has saved her darling child, and avenged her king! The spirit of the great Alphonso nerved my arm, and inspired the well aimed blow.

Sancho's courage all forsook him; guilt, powerful guilt, weighed down his faculties, and, deprived of his abettor and counsellor, he seemed as if forgot, and abandoned by all the world; at length policy and self-preservation suggested, something of necessity must be done, and looking down at De Carma, he exclaimed, fare thee well subtle, but powerful genius; in some instances I have reason to lament thee, in others to rejoice at thy death; then addressing the countess; fear me not, madam, continued he, I came to serve you; Gonsalvez, blinded by passion, and impelled by his eager desire of obtaining Leonora, presumed to violate the sacred asylum of your castle, and pollute its courts

courts with slaughter; instructed of his treachery, I flew to save the helpless Leonora, and appease a mother's anxious fears; but your heroism has outstripped my speed, and raised my everlasting admiration; mark me, added he, turning to his followers, instant death shall follow any outrage committed within these domains, go, some of ye, and seek the soldiers of Mendoza, bid them attend their lady. Almeria perceived his artful meaning, but dissembled, she still held the dagger, presented her hand willingly to Sancho, when he requested to lead her forth with soothing blandishments, he attempted to palliate her confinement in the fortress, by assuring her, his conscience had ever since reproached him with his cruelty; he professed himself intirely cured of his momentary passion for Leonora, and lamented its fatal efforts; he concluded by proposing to end the discord, which threatened Spain with confusion and bloodshed, by uniting his destiny with

A 6

hers;

hers; with mine, exclaimed the Countess de Mendoza, shall I wed the murderer of my king, the prisoner of my husband, and the intended seducer of my child, him under whose oppression a whole people groans, and who could, with remorseless rancour, condemn me to imprisonment, and horrors compared to which death had been kindness!

Sancho bit his lips; but hard necessity constrained his speech, and set a guard over his actions. Madam, replied he, you have now the advantage; your heroic courage has awed even me; remain in your own castle, let its limits be your boundaries, I require no more; my troops shall all withdraw, and be stationed beyond your walls, that you must allow me; myself in person will march against the insurgents, and reduce the rebels to their duty; happy they who perish beneath our sword, nor lives to feel the punishments

Spain

Spain decrees, against those unnatural sons which rend her peaceful bosom.

Almeria trembled for Don Carlos, the half avowed secret hovered on her lips, and she paused —— but suddenly recollecting herself, she thanked his boasted clemency, and retired abruptly to her own apartment. Sancho could scarce restrain his passion; but dreading the determined spirit of the Countess, whilst night continued, he drew off his soldiers, and went alone, and unattended, to seek the place where De Carma breathed his last, slowly he descended to the subterranean vault; he beheld the breathless body of his friend, he gazed, with folded arms, on the sad remains, and moralized upon his guilt; this, then, cried he, is the end of man, thus fades his glories, and thus his earthly splendour sets; for what then do we struggle, is it for happiness, it flies far from ambition and the grasp of power; is it for fame, one black action obscures

obscures the lustre of a thousand great and glorious acts, one foul deed of horror has undone me, and not only me, but thousands have reason to execrate it, besides Alphonso ; the golden age seemed again to revive throughout Spain, laughing plenty filled our stores, the purple grape yielded luxuriant riches, commerce flourished, and man was made happy by a worthy king, excellent laws, and enjoyed the fruits of his own industry, ambition fired my soul, and see the sad reverse, cursed success, we smote the royal victims. I boldly seized the diadem, and the fickle crowd, tired by continual prosperity and increasing happiness, changed masters with delight ; well are ye punished, discontented mortals, ages were scarce enough to atone for your abandoning a man, just, benevolent and great ; already famine stalks abroad, already do ye crowd around my steps, begging employ or bread ; I glory in spurning such inconsistent.

sistent beings; go .howl and starve, expect not relief from Sancho, for in the moment he grows merciful, ye will forget to fear him: then taking the cold hand of De Carma, fare thee well, cried he, companion of my prosperous days, thou wilt not be a witness of thy masters fall, for every omen whispers my foreboding soul, that ruin is nigh at hand, yet I will boldly meet it, nor shall the once dreaded Sancho fall ignobly. As he let go the hand of Gonsalvez, he saw something tied across his breast in the form of a scarf, which attracted his notice, and upon a nearer observation, he found it to be the veil of Leonora, which she dragged in the chapel, and upon which the initials of her name was embroidered; he snatched it eagerly, this at least, cried he, shall aid my vengeance, he essayed to find if there was not some secret entrance; but in vain, all was so closely fitted that no trace of any door remained, and he was constrained to retire, unsatisfied and discontented; but
he

he ordered the body to be carried to his own tent; the next morning he quitted the castle of Mendoza, pursuant to a plan he had formed, and contented himself with blocking all access to it, by troops stationed around, whilst he himself hastened to oppose the Moors, and relieve Saragossa.

Meantime Leonora and Victoria, by the care of the good old monk, were provided with every convenience, and Don Pedro began in a short time to recover his strength. Leonora heard daily of her mother, though that prudent woman never indulged herself with an interview, to avoid any suspicion; but the knowledge that her mother was free from any immediate danger, gave a happy flow of spirits to Leonora. She lavished the greatest attentions on Don Pedro, he was the bosom friend of Don Carlos, and the unsuspecting Leonora could not imagine that elevation could change the nature of
Don

Don Carlos ; she therefore past all her time with Don Pedro, unknowing disguise, she spoke alone of her beloved, she wondered at his long neglect, but imputed it to his eager pursuit of glory ; she would often lead Don Pedro to a recess of the garden, retired from every one, to make him repeat the deeds, the actions of Don Carlos ; she would hang with rapture on his words, and pay the sympathetic tear to the remembrance of his sufferings in the fortrefs ; could mortal man, unknowing love, unfettered by engagements, enjoy such conversations unrestrained, and not feel a softer sensation ; he looked, he listened and adored. in vain he thought on Don Carlos, in vain every look, every word of Leonora bespoke her undeviating attachment to him, the sentiment was too powerful to be subdued, and he could only struggle with it in secret ; yet every day fed the subtil poison, the penetration of Victoria, soon perceived the motive which retarded the cure of Don Pedro ; but Leonora

ora thought not of it, and continued her artless freedoms. One day as they sat in the garden, and Don Pedro had expressed in the most lively manner his attachment to Don Carlos, Leonora, more than usually animated, exclaimed, as she rose, may every blessing attend thy steps, may your protecting arm ward off the impending blow, and guide the hero to the fight of his Leonora! Ah, said Don Pedro, dropping on one knee, why should Leonora lavish all her beauty on one individual; most lovely of women, pity the friend of Don Carlos, help me to conquer myself; ah, pardon my rash avowal; but what will not love and despair drive one in a moment of desperation to commit. Leonora, astonished, turned away her head, and exclaimed, gracious heavens, what an unexpected blow: she had already retired a few paces; but her natural benignity, instantly conquering all ideas of resentment, she returned to Don Pedro, who yet remained kneeling, and appeared
to

to undergo all the horrors of remorse and despair; you cannot reach the house without some assistance, said Leonora, in a timid voice, and the regard I bear the friend of Don Carlos, will not permit me to abandon him. Don Pedro rose, but he dared not accept her offered arm. Leonora took his hand, bury this night in oblivion, said she, and the friendship, the remembrance of Don Pedro shall be as dear as ever, to the heart of Leonora; confused and abashed, he dared not reply, and slow and silent they returned through a shady alley, many and various were the emotions, which severally occupied their thoughts; Leonora, conscious of her own rectitude, pitied Don Pedro, and dwelt more than ever on the image of Don Carlos; Pedro, on the contrary, felt the injustice he had done his friend, and knowing the virtues and constancy of Leonora, felt humbled and abashed before her. As they passed through the court, which led to the apartments distinct from
the

the house, and in which Leonora resided, an armed knight glanced swiftly by them, Leonora caught his angry eye; heavens, what were her emotions, it was Don Carlos, an exclamation from her startled Don Pedro; it is over, said she, Carlos comes from the garden; he has beheld your emotion, and he believes me guilty. Don Pedro hastened as fast as he was able, but only arrived time enough to see his deceived friend gallop swiftly off; he returned and found Leonora inconsolable, with her was the kind, the attentive Victoria, and a fair stranger, whose form even the partial eyes of Don Pedro, could not help allowing superior, to that of Leonora; but she wanted her sweetness, her elegance and native dignity; he soon found they were not unknown to each other, and found she was Donna Aurelia, the inflexible mistress of Don Alvarez. When the grief of Leonora had a little subsided, she endeavoured to account in some degree, for Don Carlos's sudden

sudden appearance (Aurelia complaining of fatigue, had retired to rest) and Victoria could only tell the unhappy Leonora, that Aurelia was brought thither by Don Carlos; ah, cried she, he has then forgot me, false to his vows, he scorns me, and yet could not break my seeming inconstancy, wealth and power has subdued his soul, and the humble Leonora is contemned, yet sink not abject spirit into dull dejection. No, remember thou art the representative of Mendoza, and shake off this ignoble weakness, this was an effusion of the moment; Leonora was of too mild a nature to be a perfect heroine, Don Carlos alone occupied her thoughts, and she fell into a melancholy silence, Victoria wept the woes of her friend; but Don Pedro, alarmed at her silent anguish, threw himself at her feet; it is I, exclaimed he, with an impassioned tone, it is I only am to blame; yielding to my natural impetuosity, I have destroyed your peace,
lovely

lovely adored Leonora; but trust to my zeal, ah, trust to the violence of my love, which would purchase your happiness at the expence of mine. I go, I tear myself from this hallowed abode, from the sight of all my soul holds most dear on earth: I will seek Don Carlos, I will bring conviction to his soul, and restore Leonora to the love she merits.

Ah, replied she, seek him and clear my fame, his love I never more must hope for; Aurelia, once contemned for me, now asserts her empire, and ambition has given place to love.

Don Pedro vowed to know no rest, till he saw her happy, and taking a hasty farewell, departed from the monastery; the good old monk and Victoria laboured assiduously to restore peace to the afflicted soul of Leonora. Outward composure could not be attained, whilst the dart rankled within, and poisoned the
source

source of comfort; Aurelia was seemingly as deeply affected, and obstinately sought perpetual solitude. Leonora did not covet her company, and therefore made no effort to draw her from it; the reverend protector of the heiress of Mendoza was often absent from his abode, to obey the calls of charity or religion; at his return the first object of his care was Leonora, and the constant assurance he always gave her of her mother's safety, contributed in some degree to alleviate her sorrows.

One evening at his return, he seemed animated with new and uncommon vigour, his step was more firm, his form was more erect, and heroic fire sparkled in his eyes. I have seen Don Carlos, cried he, these aged arms have embraced my king, and the blessing of an old man was revered and esteemed; he knows the heir of Alphonso, the bolt of heaven is in his hand, he guides its unerring aim, and Spain shall soon rejoice. Tell me,
said

said Leonora, tell me at large this great event.

“ I was absent, continued he, the day Don Carlos brought hither Donna Aurelia, to claim our sanctuary, and the prior making a mystery of his reasons for so doing, I could only repine in secret at your consequent distress, but which I inwardly determined to endeavour to remove. I judged the mistaken hero meditated some vast enterprize, and was not far off. Protected by my age and habit, I mingled unsuspected amongst friends and foes ; I found the soldiers of Sancho alarmed and troubled ; those that had witnessed the heroic action of your mother, and had beheld the statue of Alphonso, breathed amidst their fellows their contagious fears. Others had heard that an heir still existed of their ancient and beloved king. In short, conjecture and dismay sat brooding on every brow, when a loud and sudden alarm filled even my old

old heart with horror, for it proceeded too surely from the castle of Mendoza. At that moment I forgot my age and infirmities; I raised this crucifix aloft, and heaven, seconding my pious wish, nerved my trembling hands, and gave my voice its wonted energy, I exclaimed aloud, Castilians! brave descendants of your godlike fathers! rouse from inaction, bid peace and smiling plenty bloom once more through your deserted plains, revive the drooping olive, prune the neglected vines; return to your allegiance, drive out the vile usurper of his master's throne, and bid the voice of anarchy and discord cease.

“ The spirit that I wished was roused, the impatient soldiers, quitting their ranks, thronged around me, the hoary veteran leaning on his spear, cast on me a look of mingled distrust and curiosity; while the young and ardent soldier, alike enthusiast in war or enterprise, with eager supplicating looks of impatience, seemed anxiously

to wish the sequel of my story. 'There are among ye, I continued, those that knew Alphonso; even now I see the tearful eyes of many that witness the truth of my assertion. To you that never knew him, his virtues, the remembrance of which still exist, speak more forcibly than any language of mine. I knew him well, and surely twenty years of servile bondage must make ye all regret him; adore then this God who, merciful, has punished you but a little with the scourge of his wrath, and who restores you a king worthy to succeed his father: the noble Ramirez de Mendoza preserved him for you. Will you then witness the fall of his virtuous, his heroic widow?——

Scarce had I uttered these words ere a general shout interrupted me, and the surrounding crowd with one voice cried out, we will rescue the lady of Mendoza, and swear allegiance to the son of Alphonso. Lead on.

“ The

“ The old men pressed round me ; they kissed my hands, and bathed me with their tears ; in this moment of delight, my children, I could not restrain mine, I mingled them with theirs ; and these sensations of delight I would not have exchanged for worlds. The younger part of my hearers were impatient to depart, but ere we reached the castle, the noise grew fainter, and at length died away. Many lights were however visible, and we found our path marked by the red hand of slaughter ; I advanced before the rest, the centinel knew and admitted me ; I assured him my followers were all friends. I left some of them however without, and followed by the rest traversed the courts, penetrated to the inner part of the castle, where we found Donna Almeria surrounded by her friends, and in the very action of raising Don Carlos from his knees. Convinced that all hung upon his immediate appearance, I hesitated not, but falling before him, exclaimed, Long

B 2

live

live Don Carlos, king of Leon and Saragossa !

“ The astonished Carlos looked stedfastly at me ; he could scarce believe himself awake ; but the good tidings ran like a wildfire through the ranks, and reiterated shouts of his name roused him from a momentary lethargy, he turned to your mother ; that noble, that exalted woman, finding the first great wish of her heart fulfilled, attempted to bend the knee before her king, but he, alive to every sensation of filial duty, caught her in his arms, exclaiming, forbid it, heaven ! rather let me prostrate myself, and worship the beneficent hand whose fostering care has made me what I am ! He tenderly embraced her, but, hero-like, impatient to know his brethren of war, he accompanied me to the great court of the castle, where they were all assembled. Every tongue hailed him king, every hand was raised to heaven, and every knee bent before him.

him. Carlos must have been more than mortal, had he been at that moment unmoved. Your mother joined us, and Don Carlos, all gratitude, vowed to know neither peace nor pleasure till her fame was cleared, and the tyrant of Spain destroyed.

“ Your mother bowed her thanks, and gave orders for the accommodation of the army within her walls; with joy I beheld her, freed from every impending danger, re-enter the noble castle of Mendoza, led by the gallant Carlos. When we were seated, he requested to know by what means she had been thus providentially saved. Heavens! exclaimed the countess, was it not you, my lord, who so boldly repelled my thronging foes? Was it not you that, beneath yon very arch, alone and unsupported, overthrew their strongest bands?

B 3

“ No,

"No, interrupted Carlos; unhappy by a recent event, I was wandering solitary and dejected in the forest adjacent, hoping unseen at the midnight hour to elude your watchful spies, and enter the castle. Whilst I contemplated at a distance its lofty turrets, a sudden gleam, springing from unusual lights, darted across my astonished sight; I heard loud cries, as of many combatants, I feared some treachery, and flew to preserve your invaluable life. I found no one oppose my entrance. The conflict was all within; the hall and staircase was filled with the dead and dying. As I advanced still farther, a stranger knight, completely armed, rushed forth; he seemed astonished as his hasty glance encountered me. Don Carlos, said he, to you I leave the defence of your mother, whilst I haste to disperse the remains of her invaders; the accursed tyrant, unmindful of his word, took advantage of her unsuspecting security, but thanks to heaven, she lives! As he spoke thus,

thus, he passed on, and upon entering, I found you, madam, surrounded by the faithful few the hasty attack had left. Let instant search, cried the countess, be made, after this gallant stranger, all gratitude be his.

“ The tumult being now totally subsided, your mother, with my assistance, unveiled all the mystery before the astonished Carlos. When she had ended, and presented him with the testimonies of his birth, she turned to me, and now, holy father, satisfy the fond affection of a mother’s soul, how does my Leonora? I observed Don Carlos well, he coloured at the mention of your name. I answered every fond, every particular enquiry of your mother, during which Don Carlos was evidently uneasy; at length your mother roused him from his painful reverie, by requesting an escort to fetch you, for, added she, can I longer separate myself from my beloved, my affectionate Leonora!

nora! No, let me hasten her return, that she may participate my joy, and congratulate her king.

“ Don Carlos instantly ordered a troop of cavaliers to be got ready, and hurried out of the apartment to hide his emotion. I followed him, I caught him by the arm, and intreated him to hear me. If what you would say, returned he hastily, concerns Leonora, keep it within thy own bosom, my resolve is made, nor heaven, nor earth, shall shake it; yet if it will comfort thee, or satisfy her, know that I love her to madness, to adoration, but that my happiness is embittered, my peace for ever broken, but all shall depend upon my seeing her.

“ Go then, lovely and virtuous Leonora, let the mild conviction of truth breathe from your lips the accents of comfort to the distracted Carlos; go, my worthy

worthy and amiable child, and may the blessings of an old man attend you."

Leonora was lost in thought, she heard not a word of Don Pedro, and she dreaded some mischance had more fatally confirmed the rash suspicions of Carlos, but confident of her innocence, she determined to solicit an instant explanation, and prepared to return to her paternal home. Victoria eagerly rejoiced, and doubted not the ascendancy of her friend, if she could once get Don Carlos to give her a patient hearing. Leonora, ever benevolent, pitied the forlorn situation of Aurelia, and although since the first evening of her entering the monastery, she had rudely avoided her, yet she passed over every thought of resentment, and sent her a pressing invitation to accompany her to the castle of Mendoza, where she would find comfort and protection. Aurelia was buried in thought when the messenger brought her Leonora's billet; she mused

over it some time, and at length said, with a malicious smile, fortune, I thank thee, this was beyond my hopes; yes, I will go. Tell your mistress I am ready to attend her. She joined Leonora, with a face of smiles, was all condescending sweetness, and ere they had reached the castle, she had gained much ground in Leonora's good opinion.

The countess received them at the gate, and clasped her beloved daughter to her matron bosom. She welcomed the other ladies with her usual affable politeness, and then taking the hand of Leonora, come, my beloved, said she, let me present you to Don Carlos, no longer heir of Mendoza, but son of the great Alphonso. Let me recommend the child of his faithful vassal to his protection; the remembrance of your early friendship may soothe the unexpected weight of royalty, and dispel the gloom with pain I see frequently spread on his brow. Leonora's agitation became violent;

violent ; her mother ascribed it to another cause, and whispered as she led her, remember Leonora, that thou art the only descendant of the great Mendoza, let no remembrance of a fatal passion I would have checked destroy thy future peace ; if Don Carlos gives thee his hand, let it be of his own free will ; nor do then accept it as if he held himself as bound to give it.

Leonora could not reply ; as they were now in the apartments of Don Carlos, he was seated, his head reclined on his hand, unattended, his hair and his dress disordered, and buried in so profound a reverie, that he neither heard them enter, nor saw them approach ; Leonora knelt before him at a little distance, she fancied he saw but would not notice her, and faintly exclaiming, I meant not to intrude, but only to congratulate my king, sunk nearly fainting before him ; Don Carlos hastily started up as she spake, and catching her

up in his arms, exclaimed, Leonora, kneeling unnoticed before me, Leonora perhaps dying at my feet; wretch, what hast thou done, ah, revive my beloved, my ever adored Leonora !

At the moment Carlos, as has been related, was entranced as it were, his meditations were solely upon Leonora, he had reasoned himself into the necessity of forgetting her, for his sake and her own; he had determined therefore to secure Leon, and that done, to unite her to Don Pedro, and give him the government of Saragossa, wisely concluding, that by removing her far from him, he should never repine at what he had done. This heroic resolution once taken, he easily persuaded himself that, conscious Leonora preferred another, he could see him without emotion, till she could actually become the wife of Don Pedro; he proposed to receive her with friendship, to let nothing escape him that might in any wise convey an

an idea of love, and in short treat her as his sister; but no sooner did he behold Leonora at his feet, distressed at his cold, nay even cruel neglect, than every resolution, which had cost him such infinite pains to make, vanished into the air; the Countess calling her women, would have led Leonora to her own apartment; but Don Carlos with eager warmth prevented her; is she not mine, he exclaimed, my beloved, my affianced Leonora, and shall I deliver her, thus deprived of sense by my imagined neglect, into the hands of un pitying attendants; no, madam, suffer me here to watch the tide of returning life, and expiate at her feet, the cause of this emotion. Leonora, as she recovered, heard part of what Don Carlos uttered; she beheld him on his knees before her, whilst her head reclined on the arm of her mother; she forgot at this propitious moment the error of Don Carlos, and gave herself up to the delight of loving, and being beloved; the Countess shed
tears

tears of joy, grief and despair fled from before her, and the cup of affliction seemed to be passed for ever; the castle of Mendoza, for the first time since it had lost its lord, resounded with tumultuous joy, the festive board was dressed, and the lady of its walls, strove to pay all attention to her royal guest; yet was not the heart of Leonora entirely free from sorrow, she saw a momentary cloud obscure the features of Don Carlos; she saw that he avoided even the looks of Aurelia, and that her eyes were incessantly upon him; filled with reproach and anger, she remembered her conduct was yet uncleared to him, and retiring to a balcony in the evening, to avoid the extreme heat, she soon found herself followed by Don Carlos, he sat down by her, and took her hand, but did not speak, for a few moments they kept a profound silence; at length Leonora, a stranger to disguise, and bent upon clearing herself from every doubt, began by thanking Don Carlos for the honours, with

with which he meant to load the family of Mendoza ; but at the same time assuring him she would accept of none, whilst he was unconvinced, and under the delusion of an error which might embitter every future joy ; she then related to him every transaction which had taken place, the death of De Carma, the manner in which they had saved Don Pedro, and the unexpected declaration he had made to her in the garden. Carlos was too much transported at this disclosure to retain the smallest resentment against his rival ; on the contrary, he pitied him, and resolved to use every means to discover his retreat, and endeavour to alleviate his disappointment ; by the most unwearied friendship, he eagerly pressed Leonora to be immediately his, she referred the decision to her mother, and the impatient Carlos that moment led her back to the saloon ; he exerted his utmost eloquence, but the countess was inexorable ; to raise my child, said she, to the throne of her king,

to

to give her into the protection of Don Carlos, and to behold him in the possession of my Leonora, receiving the reward of his merit, is the first and most desired wish of my heart ; but reflect, Don Carlos, a moment, you must not take to your arms, one whose house is branded with infamy ; remember, I stand accused of murder ; yes, Leonora, the hand of calumny has dared assert, that I am the poisoner of your father ; let the foul iniquity be detected, by the sentence you compelled Sancho to give, the combat can alone clear my fair fame, enter your rights, my lord, and then appoint that trial of my virtue ; my chief accuser is, gone to his last account ; but there may be yet remaining some daring sons of mischief, that will pursue his efforts ; if none appear, I stand acquitted, and thou shalt from my hand receive my Leonora.

Carlos murmured at this delay ; but allowed the justice of her observations, his conduct

conduct nevertheless manifested his impatience ; he arose the next morning by break of day, and roused his warlike friends, he appointed them to set off without delay for Leon, and hastened to take his leave of Leonora ; the heiress of Mendoza, awakened by the hurry of these sudden preparations, arose and left her apartment, to learn the cause ; as she crossed an antichamber, she looked towards a gallery, the door of which was open, and beheld Aurelia hanging on the arm of Don Carlos, with a look of earnest supplication, her beautiful dark hair fell in becoming disorder over her shoulders, her dress was careless, but elegantly studied ; the eyes of Don Carlos were fixed upon the ground ; yet he threw her not from him, but seemed listening with attention, Leonora was rivetted to the spot ; but what were her emotions ; Aurelia finished her harangue by a pathetic look, a gesture of humble, of intreating love ; Don Carlos was silent, and the eyes of Aurelia closing
by

by degrees, she at length fainted in his arms. Leonora made an involuntary movement to her assistance; but she checked the impulse, recollecting that Don Carlos might imagine she had meanly listened, although she had not been near enough to distinguish a word; she saw him, without any appearance of emotion, convey the senseless Aurelia to the care of her women, which waited without, and then hasten towards her mother's apartment; lost at the conjecture of the scene she had witnessed, surprized at the unexpected departure of Carlos, which he had not mentioned the evening preceding, Leonora wandered insensibly into the apartment he had just quitted, at the same moment he entered it by an opposite door; I have been seeking you my beloved Leonora (said he, without displaying any conscious guilt, from his extraordinary interview with Aurelia) I am going to Leon; once received as king, and publicly acknowledged, I swear I will not know

know rest, till I claim my promised treasure; my people expect me, they have groaned too long under the influence of tyranny, and my private gratification must give place at this moment to the public good. Adieu, my Leonora, receive my hand, and with it the honour of thy king to make thee his, and may no intervening clouds cast a gloom over the auspicious moment; hark, the trumpet calls me, adieu, he embraced her, and impelled by the ardour of his love, joined his brave friends, and marched without delay to Leon; the fame of Don Carlos had long been known, and his deeds revered in Spain; but when they knew he was the promised heir of Alphonso, joy and emulation pervaded every breast, the young men of all ranks flocked to his standard, the old men brought the spare produce of their hard earned substance to feed his troops; many which had fought with his brave father, when in early youth he opposed the infidels, came

to behold him living again in Carlos, the warm tear of affection, oft bedewed the hands of the young king, and none approached him, but returned content; many miles from Leon, he was met by the inhabitants, bringing with them the great officers of Sancho's court, in chains; Carlos received the loud welcome of his people, with courteous affability he proved before them the validity of his claim; and turning to his captives, my friends, said he, fear nothing from me, if there had been one amongst you, whose daring treachery had lifted his arm accessory in the murder of my father; that man had probably been foremost to welcome me, and secure my favour; but ye have all sworn allegiance to your master, and although Sancho has proved himself both a traitor and tyrant, it is not for them who feed upon his bounty, to adjudge him such; go then free, seek your master and save him with your lives, for know, that though I solemnly swear never to make
peace

peace with the murderer of my father, yet against him alone I wage the war; distress and force alone, in the utmost and most direful necessity, shall compel me to shed the blood of one, even the meanest of my subjects.

Amazed, the inhabitants of Leon could scarce credit what they heard, the officers of Sancho were set instantly at liberty, and Don Carlos entered his capital city, amidst the loudest acclamations; all ranks hastened to swear allegiance, and acknowledge him their king; he took possession of the royal palace, and calling together a council, took the most effectual measures to ensure his own, and the general safety; he received daily fresh submissions, and his throne was soon firmly established by hearing from Alvarez, that he had taken Saragossa by storm; but that the tyrant had escaped by a subterraneous passage, and he believed was fortifying the strong fortress of St. Joseph. Don Carlos

Carlos sent instructions to Alvarez, to leave a proper garrison in Saragossa, and to distribute his army, so as to watch every motion of the fortress without, at that advanced season, pretending to besiege a place, now justly deemed impregnable; Don Carlos was then publicly crowned king of Leon and Saragossa; but he would have no tournament, no diversions, till his Leonora could share them: he sent for her and her mother to come to court, and his summons was received with joy by them both, notwithstanding a transient thought would now and then ruffle the serene bosom of Leonora, when the remembrance of Aurelia came across her mind; the countess was justly incensed at the capricious rudeness of that lady, for she had abruptly left the castle, the very day Don Carlos quitted it for Leon. Leonora buried her observations in her own breast, and that of Victoria, she would not revive the recent sorrows of her mother, nor disturb the tranquillity

quillity she saw daily returning, by communicating her fears, or suspicions; they were welcomed on their arrival in Leon, Don Carlos on horseback, attended by all the flower of the Spanish court; he conducted them to the palace of De Carma, where the widow of Gonsalvez waited to receive them, the cordiality she had ever shewn her niece and Almeria, was only clouded by the recent circumstance of her husband's death, her gentle nature shrunk from the touch of Almeria, she adored her virtues; but alas! her hand had made her a widow. Don Carlos apologized for leaving them there, as he could not with propriety receive them in the palace; but he was not idle in farthering that happy day; he caused it to be proclaimed throughout Leon, that the accusers of the countess of Mendoza, should in ten days appear, within the appointed lists, and make good their charge by force of arms; the intervening time, Carlos was never absent long from
Leonora,

Leonora, as it drew nearer, his raptures increased, and he made the countess solemnly promise, that the day after her acquittal Leonora should be his.

The important day came at length, and all was fearful expectation, the lists were adorned with every magnificence, and thousands crouded the space allotted them; at an early hour, on a raised tribunal, sat those judges which had formerly tried the countess; facing them was balconies, with curtains drawn before them, for the ladies; in the centre, one for the king, as he did not choose to be publicly seen; on one side of the judges seat, was raised the awful scaffold, covered with black, on which was heaped the fatal pile; on the other was a stand for the accused lady, and her attendants; when the judges were seated, a herald cried aloud, for the criminal to appear, and immediately, with all the conscious dignity of innocence, the countess De Mendoza ascended to the
seat

seat prepared for her, accompanied by Leonora, Victoria, and several ladies; she bowed to her judges and the spectators, and then sat down, half supporting the trembling Leonora, whose agitation could not be concealed; the trumpets sounded thrice, the eastern barrier opened, and one knight appeared unattended, his shield without a device, and his armour plain; again the trumpets sounded, and from the western barrier, advanced six knights of martial mien, their armour was beautifully wrought, party coloured flames waved over their burnished helms, each bore on his shield, a fiery dragon, with this motto, "the avenger." Leonora turned still paler, her eyes wandered towards the balcony where Carlos was to be placed, she saw the curtain move, convinced he was there, she felt re-assured. The herald then read the Countess's accusation, which the six knights declared they were come to uphold; he then read a brief statement of

C

her

her innocence, which the single knight declared he was determined to maintain; the six friends then drew lots which should first attack him, and that decided, the trumpets and clarions sounded anew, and the two combatants flew at each other without delay, their skill was unequal, for the knight with the plain shield, unhorsed his opponent at the second shock, another instantly presented him he held some time in play, with evident advantage, at length seizing him in his arms, he dragged him off his horse, and passing the countess's stand, gracefully bowed, and threw her enemy at her feet; the third flew upon him with great force, and the defender of Almeria, found he was not so easy to be conquered as his friends had been; a long and obstinate combat took place, many wounds were given, and their blood streamed together; the heroic defender of oppressed innocence at length prevailed, and collecting all his strength, by a well directed blow, he overthrew his antagonist,

antagonist, several attendants came and conveyed him with care out of the lists, three more still remained, and one exulting already paraded before him, almost fainting from fatigue, and loss of blood, the generous stranger still prepared to oppose him, the countess shuddered, Leonora beholding the unequal conflict, sunk half fainting into the arms of Victoria; but at the moment of the onset, the trumpet suspended their engaging; the barrier opened on the eastern side, and a knight appeared, who fixed the attention of every one, loud shouts from the surrounding multitude, proclaimed they knew him well, a plume of white feathers waved friendly over his helm, his shield was covered with resplendent rays, and his motto was "the champion of distress;" in a voice of calm, collected courage, and in accents the most friendly, he besought the countess's knight to retire in safety, content with having overcome, and gained resplendent honours, adding, if he

would delegate the cause to him, the glory still should be his own. The stranger bowed and quitted the lists, scarcely able to sit his horse, from pain and loss of blood; the two combatants now looked at each other for a moment, they seemed to measure each others strength, and at length flew with impetuous force, swift as the barbed lightening were their blows, the soul of Leonora, which seemed departing, felt new energy and revived, she offered up her prayers in secret, for the champions of her mother; she saw her eyes beaming with the transport of innocence, lifted up to heaven, she blamed her own want of fortitude, and raised the hand of her mother to her lips, sat in anxious and painful expectation.

For nearly an hour the combat was doubtful; at length the better cause prevailed, and the haughty abettor of vice sunk beneath a more powerful arm; two still remained, the first advanced with a
flow

slow and regular pace ; age seemed to have laid his iron hand upon him, he stopped ere he had ran half his course, and putting down his lance, hold, cried he, had you met me under any other form than that of him whose loved command I so many years obeyed, I could have opposed thee, with an arm which still retains its ancient force ; I know thee not, but thou appearest to me Alphonso's very self ; nor will the once fam'd Garcias disdain to publicly avow a new-found conscious error. Since I and my companions in arms took our places behind yon barrier, our chief (whose name I am bound by oath never to reveal) was long time conversing with a stranger, and seemed much disturbed ; I heard enough to know the cause I was engaged to serve, was that of vice ; and at the moment our last friend was conveyed from off this bloody field, I ordered yon miscreant to be seized ; produce him, guards, and let him defend his cause.

Amazement seized on all the spectators, but more especially on the countess, when she recollected the steward which had fled from the castle immediately after the death of Ramirez. The wretch, precluded from all possible means of escape, fell on his knees, and confessed, that at the instigation of Gonsalvez De Carma, he had poisoned the Lord of Mendoza, and supported by him and the king, he had endeavoured to criminate the countess, but after he had received the wages of his crime, his conscience every day reproached him, and he determined to prevent further bloodshed, by avowing his crime, but he did not arrive till the combat was begun, and then unfortunately had entered the wrong barrier, where the enemies of the countess had employed threats and promises alternately to change his purpose.

The field now rang with the acclamations. The judges pronounced the countess cleared, and the graceful knight riding up to her seat, pulled off his helmet, and

and discovered himself to be Don Carlos. Ah, sir, said the countess, why would you risk a life so dear to Spain? How shall I ——. No more, dear madam, interrupted Don Carlos, it was you that preserved my being, honour and gratitude demanded it should be risked for you. All Spain shall feel the joy resulting from this happy day, and that on which my beloved Leonora shall bless me with her hand. Leonora blushed, and drew down her veil, and at the moment Don Carlos was presenting his hand to Almeria, a loud tumult was heard; the sixth knight overleaped the barrier, and darting his lance through the body of the unfortunate criminal, die, wretch, cried he, whose cowardly conscience, wrought upon by monkish wiles, hast overturned my hopes. Then turning round, every nerve seemingly writhed with passion, defend thyself, Don Carlos, or whoso'er thou art, I defy thee to mortal combat. Don Carlos flew instantly to meet him. The conflict was dreadful;

Almeria shuddered; Leonora sat like the statue of despair; her hands were clasped, her eyes fixed, and except an involuntary start, every blow that resounded from the armour of Don Carlos, she appeared insensible to all around her. A well-aimed stroke wounded severely the horse of the youthful Spaniard; it reared, plunged, and at length threw its master. A groan was heard on all sides, and nothing but the strictest sense of honour could have restrained the brave cavaliers of Leon from breaking into the lists to save the son of their revered Alphonso; but the guardian angel of Don Carlos flew with vigilance to shield him; his adversary's steed was frightened by his fall, and gave Don Carlos time to recover himself. The combat was then renewed, nor did the stranger disdain the advantage chance had given him; several deep wounds seemed to inflame his rage, and gave him more the appearance of an infernal spirit than a brave knight; but at length, finding himself overpowered and
beginning

beginning to reel in his saddle, he cried out, Carlos, thy better fortune has prevailed! and clapping spurs to his horse, was out of the lists and out of sight almost at the same instant. Don Carlos was hailed victor, and presented his hand to the countess De Mendoza, Don Garcia de Ovieda supported the trembling Leonora, who seemed every step, to dread some new assailant to the life of Don Carlos; immediately he ordered search to be made for the gallant stranger, that first opposed the six knights (whose leader he was at no loss to imagine) but none knew him, nor he could not be traced; Don Carlos no sooner had gained from Leonora the confirmation of his wishes, than he ordered the most sumptuous preparations, for the celebration of their nuptials; he proclaimed a tournament which should last ten days, the prize to be each day bestowed by the queen. Leon, so long under the influence of gloomy tyranny, began to revive at the sound of joy; three hundred bulls

were condemned to add to the diversions of the day, and every Spanish cavalier ardently desired to distinguish his prowess. On the evening of that memorable day, which had cleared the fame of the countess De Mendoza, a messenger arrived in haste, and enquiring for her, delivered her a letter, which he assured her came from Felicia De Carma; she opened it, and read as follows.

TO ALMERIA.

“ PURSUED by a cruel fatality,
I can only snatch a moment to warn you,
my beloved relative, that danger threatens you; from the peculiarity of my circumstances, my appearing to day would have been improper; but I was awaiting, in anxious impatience, the result which must either have given me the most ardent pleasure, my heart was capable of receiving, or the most poignant degrees of pain. During this moment of suspense,
I was

I was told a stranger requested to see me, he was admitted, I saw he was armed, but he concealed himself in a large cloak; my ideas were all centered in one point, and I exclaimed, do you come from the field, is it decided? It is, replied he, in a low murmuring tone, as if he suffered from pain; it is decided; Don Carlos triumphs, and the murderers of your husband is acquitted; my heart shrunk within me, he doubtless observed my confusion, and proceeded; virtuous Felicia, it is from your assistance, vengeance may yet arise, stimulated by that passion, but uncertain how to act, made you doubtless receive the authors of your woes, under this roof continue to deceive them with every blandishment; but ere the solemn midnight bell has rung its dreary summons, secure of aid let revenge begin its work, and appease the shade of your husband. I started, my countenance betrayed the horror of my soul, and I was unable to speak; you hesitate, you falter,

continued he; concealment is no longer necessary, know then your husband lives; and lives to punish an ungrateful woman: then throwing off his cloak, Gonsalvez stood before me; I gave a shriek, he caught my arm, be silent, said he, or instant death shall be thy portion. I know thy pageant virtue, sufficient to be convinced thou wilt not betray me, although thou darest not fulfil my purpose; some abler arm shall strike the glorious blow; but swear that thou wilt follow my outcast steps, remember Gonsalvez was once the husband of thy choice, and is so still. My lord, I replied, when his commands are such as I dare obey, banishment and poverty have no fears for me, I willingly attend you; adieu then, my dear Almeria, no longer stained with the blood of my husband; adieu, amiable Leonora, may this caution turn the impending blow, which royal treachery meditates; for alas, De Carma can have no other incitement, than a too implicit obedience to a cruel master.

FELICIA DE CARMA."

Astonishment,

Astonishment, at the reading of this letter, took possession of the soul of Don Carlos; terror and apprehension actuated Almeria and Leonora; their most implacable enemies still living, they scarce knew what course they ought to pursue; but Almeria, after a moment's reflexion, turning to Don Carlos; my lord, said she, to hinder you from obtaining Leonora, is as much the object of De Carma's wishes, as Sancho's endeavours to drive you from your lawful inheritance; take therefore all possible means, to ensure your personal safety, your existence will preserve ours; but farther to interest those who might from pity only, draw the sword in defence of my Leonora; let her from henceforth claim their protection as the wife of Don Carlos; we cannot foresee the event even of an hour, under such circumstances, therefore let the priest instantly unite your hands; Don Carlos kissed the hand of Almeria, and cried, does Leonora confirm my happiness? She blushed assent; but

continued he; concealment is no longer necessary, know then your husband lives, and lives to punish an ungrateful woman: then throwing off his cloak, Gonsalvez stood before me; I gave a shriek, he caught my arm, be silent, said he, or instant death shall be thy portion. I know thy pageant virtue, sufficient to be convinced thou wilt not betray me, although thou darest not fulfil my purpose; some abler arm shall strike the glorious blow; but swear that thou wilt follow my outcast steps, remember Gonsalvez was once the husband of thy choice, and is so still. My lord, I replied, when his commands are such as I dare obey, banishment and poverty have no fears for me, I willingly attend you; adieu then, my dear Almeria, no longer stained with the blood of my husband; adieu, amiable Leonora, may this caution turn the impending blow, which royal treachery meditates; for alas, De Carma can have no other incitement, than a too implicit obedience to a cruel master.

FELICIA DE CARMA."

Astonishment,

Astonishment, at the reading of this letter, took possession of the soul of Don Carlos; terror and apprehension actuated Almeria and Leonora; their most implacable enemies still living, they scarce knew what course they ought to pursue; but Almeria, after a moment's reflexion, turning to Don Carlos; my lord, said she, to hinder you from obtaining Leonora, is as much the object of De Carma's wishes, as Sancho's endeavours to drive you from your lawful inheritance; take therefore all possible means, to ensure your personal safety, your existence will preserve ours; but farther to interest those who might from pity only, draw the sword in defence of my Leonora; let her from henceforth claim their protection as the wife of Don Carlos; we cannot foresee the event even of an hour, under such circumstances, therefore let the priest instantly unite your hands; Don Carlos kissed the hand of Almeria, and cried, does Leonora confirm my happiness? She blushed assent; but

but a sigh escaped her, not un-noticed by Don Carlos. That very night, in the presence of all the principal nobility of Leon, Don Carlos received his long loved Leonora, from the hands of her mother, joy even to raptures beamed over his intelligent countenance, as he led her from the great hall of the palace, for Leonora's spirits were depressed, an unusual gloom hung over her, and she could scarce smile on the delighted Carlos; to be called queen of Leon, had no charms for her, but on the contrary, seemed to depress her still more; the next day, adorned with regal pomp, Leonora presided at the bull feast. Don Carlos yielding to her intreaties, forbore to engage, but his eyes were never from the face of Leonora. Almeria, whose penetration nothing could escape, whispered to Victoria, as they sat near them, alas, the misfortunes of Mendoza are not yet finished, now the revenge of Sancho begins to operate; my Leonora, the child of my fond hopes, confides not to

me

me the tumult, which agitates her bosom; Don Carlos fixes his looks intensely upon her, but they are not the looks of love, not the anxious, the enraptured gaze of admiration; a few short hours have obliterated the dream of imagination, and Leonora is, gracious heaven, perhaps the object of suspicion.

It was even so; the demon of jealousy, so lately smothered, had resumed his empire; the melancholy, the agitation of Leonora had not escaped the penetrating observation of love, in vain had Don Carlos conjured her to disclose the cause, she did not pretend to say; but some cause existed, but what, she was not at liberty to disclose, and Carlos became instantly a prey to the most torturing jealousy. The bull feast began, several fierce animals were slain, and many a noble cavalier unhorsed; at length one of the wildest bulls of Andalusia rushed forth, his eyes and nostrils seemed to breathe

breathe fire; he tore the ground before him, and his loud bellowings struck every heart with dread; an alarm seemed to give tenfold strength, and the appearance of an armed knight increased his rage, and the suspicions of Don Carlos; for this knight bore on his helm a violet plume, the favourite colour of Leonora, his device was the morning star, and underneath was wrote "fair as Venus self," across his shoulders, was flung carelessly a black scarf, embroidered with gold, on the most conspicuous parts of which an L. curiously wrought, was visible; he was mounted on a fleet courser of Arabia, and his mien was grace itself. Leonora blushed, and Carlos frowned; she saw he was displeased, and her endeavour to command herself, failed; confused and agitated, she could scarce return the salute of the cavalier, ere she felt interested for his life; the furious animal flew at him, and the contest was doubtful, the matadors were exhausted in running, but the force of the

the

the bull seemed unspent, the trumpets and other warlike music invigorated him, and twice the adventurous knight was obliged to save himself, by leaping over the arena. Carlos, with a malicious smile, praised his address to Leonora, and in her confusion, she dropped a bouquet of flowers she held in her hand; the cavalier, unmindful of his danger, sprung lightly from his horse, caught the prize, kissed it, and put it in his bosom; but he had nearly paid his life, the forfeit of his temerity, the bull rushed at him, with ungovernable fury; but ere he could touch him with his monstrous horn, the faithful courser, as if impelled by a sense of his master's danger, rushed between, and turned the attention of the furious animal to himself; the combat now was sustained on foot, and at length the undaunted cavalier ran his sword into the neck of the bull; it fell with a mighty noise, and loud applause confirmed the victory; the stranger knelt before the queen, and from her hands received

ceived a sword of infinite value, he threw away his own, and putting it in the scabbard, in a low voice hoped it might be tried in her cause. Leonora, assuming all the courage she was mistress of, desired him to return her bouquet; he sighed and presented it to her, all this was well observed by Don Carlos; all that day he preserved a gloomy silence, and at night, when Leonora retired to her apartment, she was amazed to find an old attendant upon Don Carlos, waiting her return, tears rolled down his ancient cheeks, and his whole venerable frame seemed shook with grief; he silently gave her this billet.

TO LEONORA.

“ MY debt of gratitude is paid, the daughter of Mendoza is queen of Leon; but since, Leonora, you have so early shewn your dislike to me, and your ill concealed partiality for another, I must
also

also endeavour to preserve my honour; although the effort will cost me dear; Vasquez will conduct you to the retreat I have chosen for you; I love you too well to behold you more.

CARLOS.

Leonora stood a few moments, transfixed with woe; at length recovering a little; my mother, said she, my beloved mother——will not see you, said Vasquez, unless you can clear yourself to Don Carlos. Unfortunate that I am, said she, will none have pity; alas, I now too plainly discern the plot laid for my ruin. Fatal vow, rash Leonora, I was then the wife of Don Carlos; she however assumed courage enough, to write him the following answer:

“I should be equally unjust with yourself, my lord, if I descended to reproach; from my lips, that language shall never flow; appearances are against me; at the
moment

moment I became your wife, I was drawn to make a vow of secrecy, which fatal oath has been the snare by which my peace and yours is endangered; I have nothing to say in extenuation of my conduct. If I have not merited your confidence, dispose of me as you please, transfer your esteem to my beloved mother, tell her she may one day know her daughter has not merited her displeasure; adieu, my beloved Carlos, yes, I will call you so, I will ever continue to love, although it has perhaps long since ceased to be reciprocal." She gave this billet to an attendant, who brought her word that the king had shut himself up in his apartment, and would not be seen that night, adding, that she had met the countess, who was in the deepest affliction imaginable, and who conjured her to lose no time, in obeying the injunctions of Don Carlos, as the only means left of mitigating his anger. I will not go thus alone, cried Leonora, frantic with grief; let me at least have Victoria to console

console me. She is already on the road, said Vasquez, you will shortly overtake her. The unfortunate Leonora raised her hands to heaven; ah, cried she, respectable shade of my beloved father, and ye illustrious spirits of the divine Alphonso, and his sainted queen; 'look down upon my sufferings, calm my agitated soul, and take me to yourselves. I am ready, continued she, in a lower, and more mournful tone; conduct me where you will.

Vasquez was obliged almost to carry her to the litter he had prepared, and they set forwards at a great rate. Leonora saw she was strongly guarded; alas, said she, what useless precautions: Don Carlos knows but little of my disposition, if he thinks I want any other guard than his will. They travelled all that night, and early the next morning, her conductor dismissed the soldiers, and struck into a wood.

Carlos

Carlos in the mean time, after Leonora had retired, continued a long time in conversation with the Countess de Mendoza; he confided to her all his suspicions, all his fears, and all his misery (but he yet knew not the full extent of it) he told her that Aurelia had, at every opportunity, persecuted him, and had so far forgot the modesty of her sex, as to be a solicitor for his love; he then adverted to their meeting, the morning he quitted the castle of Mendoza; that Aurelia had there, by her candid accusation of herself, and her abhorrence of her past conduct, entirely won his confidence, and retrieved his good opinion; she threw herself entirely upon his honour for protection, and spoke with the highest enthusiasm, of the virtues of Leonora; I cannot, added she, at this moment solicit her friendship, as I must first deserve it. Ere we repaired to the amphitheatre, I was sent for to the palace of Alonzo Del Vicardo. In this critical moment, it does not behove

hove me to shun any one; I went, and found in the saloon, Aurelia and Don Alonzo, her uncle. She was in tears, I hastened to assure her of my protection and friendship. "Alas, cried she, it is not for my own misfortunes that I weep, they are all trifles; it is true, my wide domains are all laid waste, the castle of my great ancestors lies a shapeless, an undistinguished ruin, yet, whilst the roof of this venerable man is left me for a shelter, ruin but little shakes me; but it is thy misfortunes, mistaken, unsuspecting man, that rends me, it is thy internal peace I would preserve, even at the hazard of thy good opinion; you turn pale, my lord, continued she; but hear me for pity sake, and trust me. Defer your marriage with Leonora, but one day, and I will bring such convincing proofs—Proofs of what, cried I, interrupting her: take heed, Aurelia; mark well what you say, for last night the holy priest gave Leonora to my arms!

"Gracious

"Gracious heaven, exclaimed Aurelia, and fainted; her women were called, and soon recovered her from this likeness of death; when they were retired, she arose, and approaching me, forgive me, sire, cried she, my ignorance must plead my excuse; permit me to retire, and hide the fatal knowledge, which would destroy your peace, deep in some dreary convent's gloom.

"You may be well assured, madam, I would not suffer her to quit me, under such circumstances; no, I insisted, soothed, and intreated; at length she told me; detested information, she told me that Don Pedro was your deliverer; he, under the secret guise of humble merit, unknown, unnoticed, foiled your accusers, and left me little to accomplish; he, presuming on the service done the mother, had twice in private seen the daughter, had gained her willing ear, had poured his artful tale, and divided

divided the thoughts of Leonora, between her rightful lord and him.

" Impatient I heard her to the end, all that rage could dictate, or disappointed love suggest, I poured upon Aurelia; she listened with calm, un-irritated silence, all this I pre-imagined, rejoined she; but turning to her uncle, continued, you, sir, can confirm my testimony; alas, my mother, the good, the pious Alonzo, with tears assured me, Don Pedro had been sheltered in his house, his wounds dressed, and every comfort hospitality could give, administered, he bound me, concluded he, to secrecy, because he assured me, the lady Leonora would have it so, and when by accident he met my niece, he would have sworn her also to secrecy, but she would not hear him, although her certain ruin must follow your displeasure, yet is she bent on uttering the truth. Alonzo paused, and shall I own my weakness; I dared to hesitate, passion deafened reason,

D

or

or I should have dragged them both even to the feet of Leonora; taking advantage of my silence, Aurelia proceeded, you are still unconvinced Don Carlos, be it so; but I can stand the test to day; you will see the Don Pedro arrayed in the most brilliant armour, wearing the colours of Leonora, and the scarf she gave him, in that moment when even Don Carlos had ceased to harm.

“ Unable to reply, unwilling to hear, more like one arising from a frightful dream, I struggled to articulate, be that the test of Aurelia’s truth, and unknowing scarce my path or destination, I left her with Alonzo, you know what followed, fatally the knight appeared, the queen was all confusion; but yet if he had been so highly favoured, why redeemed the flowers with so much sternness, and why, even now when I led her from this apartment, did she with so much feeling, such pathos of expression, press my hand and bathe

bathe it with her tears; she could not sure misconstrue my embrace; no, it was all love, all confidence in her effulgent truth." Don Carlos ceased, and the countess De Mendoza had little trouble in persuading him, that Leonora really meant no harm, and he readily promised to put implicit confidence in her prudence. The conference ended, he led his mother to her apartment, and with a light and hasty step, entered that of the queen; as he opened the door, my beloved Leonora, said he; but ere he had closed it, a violent hysteric sob arrested his nerveless hand, he looked around, the apartment was gloomy, one miserable weeping attendant alone could be discerned, by the pale glimmer of a fading lamp; the queen exclaimed Don Carlos, your mistress, my ever dear Leonora. Alas, cried the wretched duenna, falling at his feet, take my life, in pity take it, for my dear lady is lost, undone, betrayed; she then recounted to Don Carlos, whose grief rendered

dered him immoveable, the whole scene which had passed between Leonora and Vasquez, the note she had received, and the answer she wrote. In his haste, continued she, to convey her hence, he forgot to take the billet off this table; but no sooner were they gone, than my heart misgave me, I went again to your apartment, but the false page, that before deceived the attendant, was fled, and I found all void and empty. Don Carlos snatched the billet out of her hand, and read the the confirmation of his fears, what new subject to adore Leonora, her submission to his will, her noble elevation of soul, her spirited maintenance of an extorted vow, how could he for a moment suspect such a woman; he lost not an instant, he flew to Almeria, her distraction was unequalled, when she heard her beloved Leonora was carried away. Don Carlos remained some time to pacify her; he told her, he delegated the whole powers of royalty to her, and was determined, with a few

few faithful companions, never to return, never to reign in Leon, till he had found his injured wife, his beloved Leonora. Ere day break, he put his design in execution (Aurelia was already gone, and her uncle, averring all he had uttered to be truth, demanded to be kept as hostage till the king's return.)

Leonora meanwhile, was a prey to every dreadful thought, banished by her husband, unheard, thus rigorously judged, she thought it was indeed too true, that Carlos had from a motive of gratitude, raised the heiress of Mendoza to the throne; but alas, exclaimed she, weeping, his heart had no share in my elevation, that has been long estranged; the gloom of the forest through which they travelled, filled her with horror, and unable to restrain her emotions, she uttered the most heart rending complaints; night came on, and her conductor perceiving her very faint, proposed stopping, he lifted her out

of the litter, and carried her into a cave, where a scanty repast was spread before her, and a few cushions placed for her to repose on. The tears and intreaties of Vasquez could not have alleviated the distress of Leonora, so effectually as the sudden appearance of Victoria; she flew into the cavern; alas, my beloved friend, said she, whither are you going, what cruel destiny pursues you? I know not, replied Leonora, giving her the billet; perhaps that will explain to you better than all I can tell you. Victoria read it; gracious powers, said she, what can have thus misled the king? I will return to Leon, I will pledge my life to undeceive him. Vasquez interrupting her, by shewing his orders, which included her as well as the queen, and the two ladies mutually comforting each other, determined to submit without a murmur. Four days they travelled thus, through a dreary forest; on the evening of the fourth day, they reached the foot of a steep mountain, and
contrary

contrary to their usual custom of resting all the night, began immediately to ascend, the night was unusually dark, and very long, nor was it till day break that they halted; a small castle was the end of their journey, surrounded by hills, which towered even to the clouds, the gates opened with an hideous noise; Vasquez and his troop disappeared, and Leonora and her friend, found themselves inclosed within its massy walls, and surrounded by beings almost as uncouth as the place itself, yet their apartments were convents; all seemed eager to serve them, and, except an impenetrable reserve, in answering any questions, they found their situation not so unpleasant; that day they devoted to repose, and the next morning ascended the battlements. The castle was situated on a level plain, about half way up the mountain, inclosed on three sides by its lofty towering heads, the front was open, and the charmed eye could scarcely scan the noble landscape; beneath the

walls ran a gentle rivulet, which trickling from the more lofty summits, in many streams united here, and a little farther to the right, dashed boldly down a projecting rock, forming a noble sheet of liquid majesty, the mountain deer and the sportive chamois, bounded over the rocks, sometimes darting up the ragged precipices, at others swimming across the silver stream; the mountain ash, the pine and cedar towered on the different heights; far as the eye could reach, were the fertile vineyards of Andalusia; but the cheerful strains of contented labour, or of pious worship, reached not the sad abode of Leonora. Driven far away by the menaces of its defenders, the shepherd dared not tune his reed beneath its mouldering walls. One evening the setting sun had spread; as she contemplated its departing rays, unusual sadness came over the soul of Leonora, she sat in silent woe, the big tear rolled down her cheek; and the faint glimmer of the moon, reflected the hor-

rors

rors of her grated window, she reclined her head on the shoulder of Victoria, and sat for hours absorbed in sorrow; for the first time, a solemn bell struck on her ear; hark, my friend, cried she, starting from her reverie; even now at this moment, some pious orgies ascend to heaven, for beings wretched as ourselves, and shall we then despair; no, I will trust in heaven, that heaven which preserved Don Carlos from the murderer's stroke; that heaven will convince him of his error, and sooth my dying hour; ah, that his will had placed me amidst a choir of contented virgins, that my voice mingled with theirs might draw down blessings from above; but these dismal walls, these dreary bars are fit alone for criminals, and such he thinks me; as she spoke, she saw a light glide from below, and fix itself beneath her window; all attention to this prodigy, she heard a gentle voice repeat her name, and soon distinguished a man; who art thou, said she, rash mortal, that hast dared approach

approach these walls ! Be more silent, returned the voice, your weary guards nod on their post, or were they all awake, what would not love and Pedro attempt ; Pedro faintly exclaimed, Leonora ; ah, leave me, why again disturb the wretched Leonora ; art thou not satisfied, hast thou not caused me this distress, has not thy fatal passion separated me from all my soul holds dear, and involved the wretched Aurelia, in our common ruin ? Ah, my lord, reassume your reason——By heaven, interrupted Don Pedro, this is not to be borne, did not you, false woman, degenerate Leonora, send me the armour as your present, in which I appeared the day of your marriage ; did not your hands embroider that beloved scarf, and send it me as the gift of love ? Although unlike the virtuous soul of Leonora, could I, in love even to madness, reject such confirmation of what I wished, yet dreaded ; ah suffer me still, adored Leonora, suffer me to release you from captivity, and bear
you

you hence to some abode of freedom where—hold, cried Leonora, interrupting in her turn; stop, Don Pedro, nor add a sentence which will preclude you forever from my esteem, we are all fatally and cruelly deceived; I guess the worst; but ah, in this moment avoid Don Carlos, and if you really ever loved me, add to that love, compassion and esteem, for still I merit both; seek my beloved mother, reveal to her the whole of this unhappy error; but be assured the gifts you mention, never came from me; retire I charge you ere discovered, and be convinced that, placed in this castle by Don Carlos, although you lay its battlements in ashes, hew down its gates and murder their defenders, yet still amidst the ruins I would stay and glory in obedience.

By St. Jago I swear, said Don Pedro, no consideration shall induce me to quit these mountains, I will send my trusty squire to Leon, he shall reveal all that I

knew, of this mysterious business, secrecy were now a crime, to Don Carlos, and speed him hither, for this castle is none of his, and much I fear treason awaits you. Don Pedro then withdrew from the window, leaving Leonora in a perturbation she could not calm; and Victoria expressing much surprise at what she had heard, Leonora thus satisfied her curiosity.

Don Pedro having generously on his part released me from a fatal promise of secrecy unguardedly given; I will, lest any sudden event should snatch me from the world, confide the source of my present misfortunes to your friendship, trusting to your attachment to clear my sullied fame; you know every particular of the rise and progress of Don Carlos's passion, and the consequent disappointment of Aurelia, whom I never saw, till brought for refuge by Don Carlos to the monastery where we resided, she was visibly
unhappy,

unhappy, and evaded all my proffers of friendship; her subsequent behaviour to Don Carlos, and an interview I witnessed, confirmed my fears of her attachment. The evening preceding the trial of the countess De Mendoza, with infinite precaution, Donna Aurelia entered my apartment, she threw her arms around me; dear, amiable Leonora, said she, by all your future hopes of happiness, assist a wretched woman, I am lost, ruin and distraction will ensue, but for your endeavours; but first swear by our lady, never to reveal the secret, unless Don Pedro or myself consent. I hesitated, the name of Don Pedro reassured me, he, I doubted not, had too much honour to join in any deception; fatally relying too much on myself, pitying her feelings, and willing to assuage her grief, I pronounced the awful promise; in a few minutes she grew calm, and thus proceeded. From the moment Don Carlos saw you, I perceived I had no longer any claim on his affections, my
own

own were free, not all his manly graces, his captivating charms, could fix my wavering soul; you seem surprised, fair Leonora, but I avow it, love had no share in my resentment, it was disappointed ambition, and a presumptive belief, that no one could escape the powerful influence of my attractions, that influenced my actions, and I left the castle of Mendoza, with a heart corroded by envy and disgust; at Don Alonzo's I saw for the first time Don Pedro, he was young, handsome, and possessed of many accomplishments, recent mortification had made me more humble, and the attentions offered by Don Pedro, though too probably the effects of mere gallantry, flattered my wounded pride, and totally subdued my long boasted indifference; but his praises of Don Carlos irritated me beyond bearing, and I retired to indulge, in a solitary retreat of my father's, my corroding thoughts; from hence I continually heard the progress of Don Carlos, and his unabating love for
you,

you, heaven knows that was become the least of my regret, my passion for Don Pedro was become a part of my existence, and every rumour displeased me, if he was not mentioned in it. Our country residence was near the frontiers, and as I was riding rather late one evening, a party of Moors surrounded me, they slew my faithful attendants, and were dragging me away; but Don Carlos came to my rescue, he soon dispersed them, and gave me liberty and life; our retreat was already become dangerous; the Moors had now discovered it; my father was absent in Portugal, and I had no alternative, but to return with Don Carlos to the camp, before Saragossa; young, alone, unprotected, I felt all the horrors of my situation, and Don Carlos ungenerously added to them; he solicited me, fair Leonora, with all the ardour of love, I was compelled to hear him, he lamented his fatal predilection, which had extorted from him, vows he was by honour, though no longer

longer by inclination, bound to fulfil; he assured me it was all a deluge of the moment, and intreated me to have compassion; alas Leonora, time ran on, day after day, new excuses were found to delay my going, every courier added to the glory of Don Pedro, the gratitude of Carlos induced him oft to praise his friend, pleasure always beamed in my eyes, when he indulged me with the theme I loved; but at length, ashamed of inaction, and fearful of losing his mother, we came from Saragossa, to the mountains of Leon; alas, cried I, interrupting her narrative, at the moment I was careless of danger, exploring the subterraneous dungeons of St. Joseph, in search of the inconstant Carlos, he was perhaps at that very moment, protesting at your feet eternal fidelity, and forgetting the miserable absent Leonora—such, continued she, is the inconstancy of man, and such the advantages their sex get them over us, that sensibility is certainly intailed on us, as a curse;
happy

happy the woman, callous to these fires, these more subtle feelings, which add a pang to every misery. I cannot agree with you, Donna Aurelia, replied I; were we devoid of sensibility, what exquisite pleasures should we lose of so noble, so refined a nature, that the indulgence of them is the first great privilege of human nature; but proceed, and ease me of the torturing suspense I at present feel. She continued, uncertain how we might find affairs at the castle, Don Carlos proposed leaving me at the monastery, till he should be convinced there was no danger. As we entered, a lay brother informed us, that you were also in sanctuary; then I begged Don Carlos to go, and solicit your countenance and protection for me; but to my infinite astonishment, he returned no more, and I saw you accompanied by Don Pedro; your distress, and his confusion, soon unravelled the fatal mystery; I retired to weep in silence, the loss of all my hopes, I could not see you the innocent

cent cause of my sorrow, and I still more dreaded to behold Don Pedro. The next morning, perturbed and agitated, I left my apartment, and wandered through the garden, unconscious of my path; with folded arms and almost distraction in his looks, Don Pedro crossed me, he stopped, looked at me, and would have passed me; gracious heaven, what were my sensations; at that moment they overcame every idea of reserve, and my looks, I suppose, indicated the state of my mind, as I sunk at his feet.

Don Pedro is not destitute of humanity, he raised me in his arms, he bore me to a seat, and when a little recovered, I made an effort to disengage myself, he still detained me; envy not, lovely Aurelia, said he, the momentary pleasure, I at this moment experience, every heart is not callous, every bosom is not shut against the wretched Pedro; I could not speak, the big tear rolled down my cheek, varied

varied emotions tortured my almost bursting heart, and my head sunk on his shoulder; for some moments we continued silent; at length Don Pedro, who partook all my emotions, articulated, can I indeed flatter myself, say dear Aurelia, have I any share in this conflict; ah, that glance confirms the pleasing hope, I am not then indifferent, can my whole life ever repay the mighty debt; he pressed my hand to his lips, he strained me to his bosom, but suddenly recollecting himself, he dropped on one knee; what am I doing, exclaimed he, can I be so base, can I take such a mean advantage, as to offer you a divided heart; ah, Aurelia, at this moment I am on the rack. I know it all, interrupted I, and I see with horror the web our wayward fate has wrought; for as mine is decided, said he, and as a man, reason urges me to struggle against a passion, at once hopeless and disgraceful, assist me as a friend, Aurelia, and by the constant display of all thy virtues, make
me

me a convert to thy charms, and we will bury the past moments of my frenzy, in eternal oblivion, I gave him my hand to rise, and answered, I agree, Don Pedro, to the proposed terms; but, whither shall I retire, my father is absent, my uncle's military duties make him attendant on Don Carlos, and I have no resource, but the castle of Mendoza——There, exclaimed Pedro, I lose you for ever, those walls will contain again the fascinating Leonora, and her I cannot yet behold; but what can hinder us here. Ere I quit this holy sanctuary, in silent secrecy let some reverend priest unite our hands, and sanctify our vows, I will then seek Don Alonzo, tell him our marriage, and urge his return to Leon; in his house, protected by him, await my coming, nor shall it be long delayed to fulfil, the impulse of honour can alone detain me a moment from you, Leonora; you have loved, you do at this time, and can therefore judge of my emotions, they were all powerful,
love

love had so effectually eradicated pride, that humiliating soever I should have once thought it, to have accepted the hand of one whose whole affections were avowedly anothers, yet now I thought it the gift of heaven; I flattered myself, Don Pedro would not be insensible to my tenderness. I formed the romantic prospect of first consoling him, and by degrees rising to the first place, in his esteem, and I as candidly consented to all that he proposed, that hour beheld us united, and with frantic eagerness, Don Pedro embraced and quitted me, the impropriety of remaining longer in that sanctuary, after you left it, induced me to claim for a while the protestation I had dreaded, I had no longer any fears, I was now the wife of Don Pedro, and the very thought made me confident and happy. I heard with pleasure, that Don Carlos was acknowledged the son of Alphonso, and hoped the discharge of his new duties, would turn his attention from myself, and

and force him to repay with love the debt of gratitude ; but the imagination of youth is oft too sanguine ; such mine had always been, and reiterated disappointments confirm the fallacy of the air-built visions of luxuriant fancy. I had not been three hours in the castle, ere Don Carlos was thrown, by chance or design, I cannot determine which, in my way ; he assailed me with professions, it was now become criminal to listen to ; an unfortunate interruption prevented my telling him so, nor did I again see him, till the very morning of his quitting the castle ; he persuaded me to accompany him, in some disguise, to Leon, and assured me, that though he might probably be compelled to give his hand to you, yet I might rely as much upon the continuance of his affections, as upon his honour. I upbraided him with his prostitution of that sacred word, and setting his love and anger equally at nought, boldly avowed my marriage with Don Pedro, and my unalterable attachment ;

ment ; never Leonora, will his look be obliterated from my memory ; it is well, madam, said he, you do well to brave me ; but be advised power is now mine, and I shall use it ; breathe not a word respecting this detested marriage, forget you ever saw the hated Pedro, for on my life, if once he shall be found within the walls of Leon, on my soul he dies. This fatal mandate, from the mouth of Don Carlos, overwhelmed me with horror, and I fainted. Upon recovering myself, I found the king was gone ; distracted, despairing, a prey to horror, misery and woe, I could not command myself to see you or the countess ; but accompanied by my women, I went to Leon, from thence I dispatched a messenger to Don Alonzo, and denied myself to all intruders. Don Carlos in vain attempted to see me, and the arrival of my uncle last night, put a temporary stop to his persecution ; the good old man pitied my distress, he promised never to abandon me, and dispatched many messengers

sengers in search of my husband ; they were unsuccessful, for last night, when all but myself were retired to rest, I heard a step come lightly across the gallery, and some one knocked at the door, I opened it hastily ; but imagine my horror, it was my husband, he caught me to his bosom, he soothed, caressed, and by degrees brought back my recollection. The first words I uttered, was, fly Don Pedro, ah, fly this dangerous city ; he suffered my emotions to subside ; but alas, I had previously disclosed enough to convince him, that our marriage would be displeasing to Don Carlos ; but I carefully avoided the mention of love. I respect his motive, said Don Pedro, with a smile, he holds me unworthy of you, but he knows not my resolution, and happy in his own attachment, is insensible to the charms of my Aurelia ; although encircled in the arms of a husband whom I adored, yet my fears for his safety, made me receive his endearments with a reluctance bordering upon coldness,
he

he reproached me tenderly, but ascribed my indifference to its real cause, which was not in the least diminished, when I heard he was come expressly to defend the Countess de Mendoza; shall I dare to tell her daughter that, a prey to despair, I endeavoured, I used every persuasion to dissuade him, but it was in vain, my words were air, and Don Pedro determined; I introduced him to Don Alonzo, who agreed to take every necessary precaution, to ensure his concealment, we dreaded discovery alone from you, and I obtained, with some difficulty, permission from Don Pedro, to acquaint you, under the bond of inviolable secrecy, with this event, in order that you may repel those emotions of surprise, which by discovering my husband, would involve us all in one common ruin. Gratitude, Victoria, now indispensably bound me to preserve the secret, and I vowed to Aurelia, that I would never live the wife of Don Carlos, if his hand should be stained with the murder

E

der

der of Don Pedro; I beheld him no longer as my lover, but her husband, and still more as the avenger of my mother's honour. Carlos's infidelity had almost lost its force in my apprehensions for my dear mother's safety; but the departure of Donna Aurelia, left me at liberty to reflect; ah, my friend, how did I then want a soothing, kind and gentle monitress, could I wish Don Carlos to rate his debt of gratitude so high, could I lavish all the tenderness of my soul, on one whose actions were impelled alone by rigid honour, and were devoid of every spark of love; no, my very nature revolted at the servile thought. Don Carlos, during this conflict, entered my apartment, he saw my evident emotion, and eagerly enquired the cause; I could not give him any reason, but he ascribed it to my mother's impending trial, pleased that without suspicion or equivocation, I could indulge my sorrows, my tears flowed unrestrained; Don Carlos was much affected,

affected, and ere I could hinder him, threw himself at my feet; dear Leonora, cried he, pressing my hands, hear my resolve, and let it restore calm to thy agitated bosom: a knight has already offered, a stranger, and one who evidently disguises both his name and rank; there lives but one man, whose glory in such a cause I would not nobly reward; but even him, detested as he is, by the rules of hospitality, shall be safe, and should the arm of this stranger, who has thus forestalled my purpose, fail to vindicate Almeria, I will succeed or die; nay, shudder not, my love, what would be inglorious life, without my Leonora, the first, the only partner of my heart; Victoria, my senses were beguiled, I faintly articulated, do I indeed possess it wholly, and undivided? At the doubt, he started on his feet, and with a frantic emotion which alarmed me, he folded his arms round me; loveliest of women, exclaimed he, the very doubt convinces me of the rank I hold in thy

esteem; yes, Leonora, there is only one particular, which I cannot disclose; but rely upon the honour of Don Carlos, when he assures you, that no other ever had, or ever can supply your place; Victoria, was it in nature to disbelieve Don Carlos, should I reject him, whose truth had been so long a test, upon the evidence of one who acknowledged she had not even common friendship for him, but still retained an ancient enmity against him; love destroyed in a moment, the very basis of suspicion, and I assured the king I had not a doubt remaining. He staid with me near three hours; at parting, he embraced me, with these remarkable expressions; our enemies find open force insufficient to wound us, and I am confident will employ the most insidious arts; be guarded, my beloved, at this moment I harbour not one suspicion inimical to our mutual happiness; but you know the unfortunate failing of my disposition, too easily alarmed where

where love is concerned, and therefore have pity on me, and beware.

Enigmatical as this was, it served to convince me, that Aurelia had played upon my feelings with a forged story, and that the same means had been employed with Don Carlos. Incapable of rest, I passed the night, walking to and fro, and with the dawn repaired to my mother, she chid me gently for the little fortitude I displayed; alas, she knew not all my cause for sorrow; the combat began, I beheld Don Carlos seated in his balcony, he appeared unarmed, surely I thought he does not know Don Pedro, and thus indignantly abandons him to death; the thought was torture, and I sunk under it, my first fear was, that ere thoroughly recovered, I might have uttered some unguarded word; but my mother's attention and yours, convinced me the secret was yet unknown. I recovered, and beheld Carlos, all that my most inventive fancy

could have formed ; ah, with what delight, what increase of affection, did he not inspire, he was my intended husband, but at this crisis, he was the deliverer of my mother, that tender mother, who had borne with such fortitude her imprisonment and wrongs, now trembled for my safety, De Carma alive, and Sancho so near as she could not repress her fears, till she had resigned me to the protection of the king ; you know, Victoria, with what transport he received my hand, and my afflictions, I believed, were all for ever ended ; how transitory are the joys which we poor mortals prize, a few short hours, and mine were all destroyed. Don Carlos left me in the evening, to attend some state affairs which admitted of no delay, I listened some time, fancying I heard a noise, at length my doubt became a certainty, the door of the closet opened, and Don Pedro, pale, faint, and with wild looks of horror, rushed forth, and threw himself at my feet ; I tried to escape, but he

he held me by the robe, and in a tone of frenzy, exclaimed, hear me or I die; my first impulse was that of anger, but recollection flashed across my mind, and I thought, ungrateful wretch that I am, has not his blood been lavished in thy defence, does he not at this moment hazard his life to serve thy mother; stimulated thus by gratitude, and an innate sense of rectitude, which banishes every idea of guilt; I calmly gave him my hand, and bade him rise, he did so, and then casting his eyes around, these are, cried he, the apartments of Don Carlos; ah, Leonora, my feelings too evidently paint my despair, let me remain here, let Don Carlos, in the first effusion of his passion, deprive of life, a wretch who cannot wish to survive the loss of you.

Hold, Don Pedro, I interrupted, utter not another syllable, you are the husband of Aurelia, I am now the queen of Leon, and the wife of Don Carlos; groaned

Don Pedro, sinking by the sofa on which I sat, and burying his face in my robe ; eternal misery is my portion, infatuated Pedro, ah pity, and forgive me !

I will do more, said I, forcing him to rise ; I will offer you my friendship, I will assure you of my most perfect esteem, and use all my influence with Don Carlos, to procure you every alleviation your situation can admit of—but I am married, returned he—and then, after a pause, mention me not to Don Carlos, madam, I would first deserve your esteem, and his ; ah, Leonora, this meeting must be our last ; I came impelled by distraction ; alas, I had nothing to hope, and yet I could not resist seeing you. Aurelia persuaded me, she hoped the sight of you, and the influence of your reason, might, properly exerted, restore me to some tranquillity ; but she knows not my heart, she sees not the rack I endure, and to hide it from her, requires
more

more resolution, than I can at this moment boast of.

The mention of Aurelia, the idea that she had planned this interview, suggested the thought, that she had in consequence formed some evil intention; I therefore intreated Don Pedro to begone, he bowed, sighed and obeyed; but ah, Victoria, what a confirmation to my doubts, the door by which he entered was locked; I cannot describe my consternation, and I exclaimed, there is treachery on foot; be under no apprehension, said Don Pedro, I can leap the balcony, and soon clear the garden, this design he executed instantly; I saw him traverse the alleys, and climb over a low gate leading to an outer court, I felt relieved from a weight of terror, and returned, the tears still visible on my cheeks, to the sofa, not five minutes had elapsed ere, by that very door, Don Carlos hastily burst into the room, his looks were full of fury, his eyes sparkled with

E 5

fire;

fire; but on seeing me alone, he started back as if disappointed, and glancing his eye around, are you alone, madam? The air with which he spoke chilled my very blood, and I burst into tears, all his rage forsook him, he fell at my feet; forgive me, my dear Leonora, I am distracted, I know not what I say; cruel necessity, fatal honour, to what dost thou compel me; but you do not hate me, no, you are too angelic; I pitied his distraction; alas, Victoria, the thread was finely spun, I raised him, I obliged him to sit by me, and by reiterated assurances, composed his perturbed spirits, my mother came to us, and we finished the evening with the utmost harmony; the next morning Don Carlos was all love, all attention, and as he led me to the amphitheatre, said, with what pride, what exultation do I see my people gaze upon my charming Leonora; all must admire her, all adore even as I do; I know not why, but my spirits were unusually depressed, I was sunk in a kind
of

of apathy, till the entrance of the knight, who wore my colours, and my device; I easily guessed him to be Don Pedro, I saw the latent spark of jealousy kindle in the bosom of Don Carlos; confused, displeased, and alive to the most dreadful apprehensions, I saw with impatience the protracted combat; at length it finished, and Don Carlos presented me indeed his hand to return; but ah, how altered, cold, unimpassioned, scarcely civil, he never vouchsafed me a look or word. As we passed the antichambers, he dropped my hand, and suffered me to walk on before him, I still held the fatal bouquet, and in despair, I tore the flowers to ten thousand atoms, the action did not escape his penetrating observation; as I dropped the last of them, he caught my hand with an impulse of returning love, passionately kissed it, and pressed me to his throbbing bosom, but seeing my eyes full of tears, he threw me from him, exclaiming, Leonora, you are inexplicable; and darting

through another door, left me to my own meditations ; convinced of the error we both laboured under, I sent to request the presence of the aged, the respectable father St. Pierre, determined to disclose the whole to him, and beg his interposition ; Victoria, you know the rest, that night ended my every hope. On my life, exclaimed Victoria, you are, as Don Pedro hinted, betrayed ; Don Carlos has no hand in your imprisonment ; but, returned the queen of Leon, who should so daringly attempt to take his wife, even from his very palace, or if not his, to whom does this castle belong ? To none that mean you any good, my beloved friend, answered Victoria, but suffer me to rule in this instance.

I do not on any account wish you to avail yourself of Don Pedro's offer ; he, of all others, you must study to avoid ; that he is suspected by your husband, is a sufficient rule to regulate your conduct by,
in

in respect to him, but no occasion should be lost to effect our escape, if practicable, and I will this very day begin some preparatory overtures.

Leonora consented to commit all to the care of Victoria, and over-fatigued yielded to her persuasions, and retired to rest. When she rose and was dressed, she beheld Victoria habited exactly like herself, and could not help exclaiming; as she drew near, what a resemblance, with our veils down, said Victoria, no one could distinguish us, and this is in my plan; at dinner she told the guard, that Donna Leonora had been very ill all night, and she was confident would not be able to exist much longer, if abridged of her usual exercise; the guard replied, all comforts within the walls they might command, but it was against his orders to suffer them to pass the gates. Victoria seemed to pause; well, said she, we must submit, but do not fail to tell your cruel master, that the consequences

quences may one day cause him to repent his rigour ; I know so well the disposition of Donna Leonora, and such implicit obedience does she pay to his slightest command, that, without an order signed by him, if you were willing, she would not pass the castle gates.

Seven or eight days past away in this manner, the spring began to grow delightful, and the confinement of Leonora more intolerable ; at length their guard appeared. I have transmitted, ladies, said he, your request to our master, behold his order, by that you are permitted to walk within a limited distance in my sight. Leonora requested to peruse the order, and turning to Victoria, said, I will not go, this is not the hand writing of Don Carlos ; Victoria gave her an expressive look, and snatching the paper, answered with some quickness, your scruples are much too refined, madam, this is written by Lopez de Grimaldi, one of the royal secretaries.

secretaries. Leonora, to appease the pretended ill humour of Victoria, promised to go out the next morning.

Their walk was not very long, the mountains made it very unpleasant; but the grandeur of the prospects, was a sufficient indemnification. For three days, they constantly claimed their newly granted indulgence; their guard was always ready, as he found them not curious, and far from expressing a wish to go beyond the limits he prescribed; the third evening, Victoria asked Leonora, if she had courage enough, to attempt escaping the next morning; being answered in the affirmative, she then unfolded her plan, they were both to be, as of late, habited exactly alike, and their veils down as usual when they went out; but with this difference, that Victoria should on that morning precede Leonora, and act in every respect like her, that when arrived within a certain distance, they should separate

parate as they had often before done, for a few paces within the wood, the guard, as he always did, would doubtless keep the false Leonora in his sight, and the moment they perceived his attention in the least remit, they were to try the resource of flight. Victoria pointed out a path she was sure led to the monastery, and promised, if she eluded her guard, to join Donna Leonora there, if not, said she with a smile, I do not fear the rage of Don Carlos; Leonora was shocked to part, but Victoria convincing her of the present necessity, she agreed.

All succeeded to their wish, the guard occasionally turned his head, to keep both in view, and Victoria, who was uncommonly swift, suddenly set off with all her speed; believing it to be Leonora, he pursued, giving at the same time a loud alarm to the castle.

Leonora

Leonora lost no time, she ran a long way, and hearing voices approach, she stept behind some bushes, and saw a party of horsemen pass, one of the foremost of which was Gonsalvez de Carma, a cold sweat issued from every pore, faint, and almost unable to stand, she sunk upon her knees, and prayed for the protection of heaven; a calm seemed to diffuse itself all over her wearied frame, but she dared not indulge a wish for repose, she was forced to abandon her path, for fear of encountering more of the count's party, but she followed a small opening in the same direction, through which she had some difficulty to force her way; night came on just as she had reached the mouth of a cavern, terrified at the gloom, she sat down, afraid to enter, and began to doze, till the sound of voices made her suddenly start upon her feet, they seemed very near, and unmindful of any danger, she rushed into the cavern, she found it wind round in an easy descent, and after
a thousand

a thousand intricacies, she was startled at the sight of a glimmering light at the farther end ; fear was now predominant in the bosom of Leonora, she called aloud to the holy virgin for protection, and sunk upon the ground ; she lay above an hour insensible, and was recovering, when a soft and gentle voice, bade her approach and fear nothing ; Leonora looked more emboldened towards the subject of her alarm, and discovered an iron gate, before which stood a nun habited in white, of a sweet and most engaging countenance, she breathed the mild accents of pity, and her words were balm to Leonora ; are you too an unfortunate, said the fair religious, ah, then I will share my wretchedness with you ; descend a little on that side, and you will find an opening large enough to enter by. Leonora did as she told her, and in a few moments was in the arms of her new friend, who tenderly embraced her, and then stopped up the entrance, that no one could perceive it; then turning

ing to Leonora, this place, said she, which appears to me, an abode of every horror, and which I have been these two months trying to escape from, is doubtless a paradise to you, after the terrors you have sustained, but I think you are now safe, oblige me now, by sharing my frugal meal, and taking the repose you seem to need; she then presented to the almost exhausted Leonora, some fruit, bread and milk, and when she had sparingly tasted of them, assisted her to lay down upon her humble bed; at day break she awoke Leonora, and begged her, when she heard a grate open above, or any noise, to conceal herself in the niche behind the bed, which she pointed out to her; I am going, added she, lovely stranger, to perform the duties of the morning, it may be probably night before we meet again; but rest here in safety, and may heaven lift its own arm to shield you. A small bell now hurried the fair nun, who, ascending some irregular steps in the wall, was

was soon out of sight. Leonora lay some hours, ruminating on all she had met with, and admiring the goodness of providence, in providing her an asylum in the bosom of the very mountains; she was lost in conjecture respecting the fair nun, and felt interested, because she had said that she was also miserable. Early in the evening she returned, Leonora placed herself as directed, and saw her followed by two ancient nuns, which helped her to bring her little provision, one of them spoke to her in the language of reproach; the other more mild, gently kissed her, pronounced her benediction, and they both retired; the moment she heard the door shut, she eagerly ran to seek Leonora, whom she embraced in a transport of joy; I know not, said she, what all powerful attraction you possess, but you have obtained a great share of interest in my affection; come, we will sup, and then talk over our affairs; Leonora complied, and was delighted with her cheerful companion,

nion, expressing at the same time, a strong desire to know where she was; her companion informed her, she was in a cave belonging to the monastery of St. Adeline Del Montagna, a community, the strictness of which is almost unequalled in Spain, they will scarce ever be persuaded to admit a stranger within their walls, except for the express purpose of becoming one of them, and it is a doubt to me, but they would have seen you fainting at their grate, ere they would have afforded you an asylum, nevertheless, they have this day received a stranger, for the heads of the house are not proof against interest, and as she proves to be the queen of Leon, she will doubtless be entitled to their pity and protection. Leonora smiled; do you smile, continued the nun, at the picture I have drawn of my order, if you do, wait till you hear my story, which will convince you I have not exaggerated; I will not say but there are some worthy, nay almost heavenly

venly characters amongst them ; that one which gave me the benediction, is of that description ; she is totally devoid of selfish meanness, austerity of manners, and frigid professions of friendship, which too generally are the attendants of the inhabitants of a cloister ; a constant seclusion from the many important duties of life, bring with it inaction, and steels the heart, against all the softer ties of nature and affection ; alas, how can they know the fond sensibility, felt by a wife and mother ; ah, these tender names, can they be uttered without emotion ! Tears interrupted her voice, but soon checking them, excuse me, lovely stranger, absorbed in my own misfortunes, I forgot yours, can I alleviate them, rely upon me, and be assured death itself, nor even emancipation, from this dreary cell for my reward, shall never induce me to betray you ; perhaps you know the queen of Leon, perhaps you are the partner of her flight ; I am indeed, replied Leonora with a sigh ; you have merited my confidence, lovely

lovely religious, and I will trespass on the night, to relate my misfortunes. She then began from the earliest period of her remembrance, and gave her new friend, a succinct narrative of all that had befallen her; the fair nun paused awhile, and then spoke thus; to remain much longer here, will be impracticable, even now I do not doubt, but there are emissaries scattered around to hinder your escaping, chance may even lead some of them, to this sequestered spot, and though these iron bars may be defence sufficient, to imprison some sighing guilty female, yet how feeble, how weak must their resistance prove against an armed force, when even I, impelled by strong connubial love, have found the means to pass them alone; I dreaded the attempt, but generosity, affection, and compassion now stimulate me to the trial; write a few lines to Donna Victoria, I will endeavour to give them to her in the church, tell her to give her answer to Isabel.

Leonora

Leonora finding the dawn approach, took out her tablet, and wrote thus, "I am in the monastery with you, but without involving the friendly Isabella in disgrace, dare not appear, if you can escape, meet us when the midnight bell is ringing, in the eastern path, leading to the mountains."

Isabel was soon summoned to her matin office, and succeeded in giving the note to Victoria, whose astonishment may well be imagined; she reconveyed the tablets to Isabel, who flew with them to her cave, the first moment she could. Leonora read as follows, "Every thing convinces me, that we have been basely betrayed; consult your own safety, dear Leonora, I am secure, but cannot accompany you without detection." Heaven protect us, said Leonora, falling on the neck of Isabel, whither shall we wander; I will guide you, said the fair nun, every turning of this cave I am well acquainted with; for, determined

mined to escape, I have explored every avenue, and revolved in my mind every circumstance; born in the mountains of Leon, a few day's journey from hence, I am well acquainted with all the secret winding paths, and can lead you safely, where I am well assured we shall meet not a trace of man.

Leonora told her, she relied entirely on her; a wretched fugitive like me, continued the beauteous queen, is willing to try every hazard; few things can appal us, and though our weaker natures sometimes yields to the impulse of fear, yet I often think we persevere more firmly, and, from possessing more patience, can stand the test of greater trials, than man with all his boasted resolution; your lot must have been hardly cast, and yet for two months you have endured, with never failing patience, this cold and dismal cavern.

F

Yes,

Yes, rejoined the nun, but conscious innocence, and a desire of vindication, has not only supported me, but given me the flow of cheerfulness you behold; for some days after my seclusion here, (which was at that time constant) I was a prey to unceasing melancholy; but in the midst of my afflictions, I forgot not my God, I applied to him without ceasing, and felt by degrees that holy calm diffuse itself through my soul, that I was able, without any terror, to take a retrospection of my situation; I know that to escape, would not be to violate any faith vowed to heaven, for I am not what I seem, I am a religious only by habit, and your persecutor, lovely Leonora, and the enemy of your husband, is also mine; all my misfortunes derive their source from Sancho, this community dread his name, they tremble at his nod, and though they preserved me from dishonour, yet have too readily obeyed his last, his final orders, in tearing me from every social tie of nature,
he

he gratified only mean revenge, for he has boasted before me, that love had no share in his injustice; providence sent me relief, even in this dungeon, and inspired some of the nuns with pity; finding that my fortitude was unshaken, and that, different from numbers of unhappy victims, which have breathed their last within this cave, I was not only alive, but calm, and in health, they interceded for me to join them in the choir, but on condition that I returned hither every night; my voice was thought good, and that was an inducement, as you have seen they fetch me every morning, and reconduct me with the same care, to my prison. During the time I remain with them, I am not allowed to speak; but my friends contrive to make amends by a little converse sometimes as we pass the many isles, which lay between this place, and the monastery itself; many endeavours have been used, to make me enter for life their society, and I have been assured, that every privi-

lege a religious can claim, shall be mine if I consent; but I have a great and powerful motive to oppose their wishes, and combat their persuasions, and finding me so steady in opposition, and so cheerful under confinement, began to make them a little suspicious, and hastened the execution of my project, for should I have been removed to another cave (for this mansion contains many such mournful tombs) I might probably have not met with such an opportunity, to effect an opening; still I have been timid and irresolute, but it was the hand of heaven, and all the return I can make, for its kindness to me, is the aid I have and can still afford to you; come then, let us dispatch, here are some dried fruits, they may befriend us much, for we must avoid every haunt of man, our whole dependence for safety lies in these mountains. Leonora aided her friend, to make their little preparations, but they were alarmed by a violent noise in the monastery; something uncommon is the cause

cause at such an hour, said Isabel, of this commotion, she ascended the stairs, and listened; I can distinguish nothing, continued she, but surely we ought not to lose a moment. Leonora acceded, and their opening being soon effected, they got into the windings of the cavern; Leonora trembled so violently, that Isabel was obliged to lead her; by day break, they emerged from the dreary retreat of sorrow, and Isabel in extacy, addressed the rising sun; hail beauteous orb, with transport I behold thee once more; and thou, all bounteous heaven, behold us with compassion, thou only canst protect us, thou only alleviate our distresses; ah, Leonora, said she, tenderly embracing her, you know not the throbbing extacy, even to pain, which plays about my heart; the first moment we shall reach a place of safety, you shall know all, you shall help to aid the power of reason, and teach sad Isabel to sigh no more.

F 3

Their

Their speed almost exceeded their strength, they traversed the mountains by unfrequented paths, during three days; the fruits provided by Isabel, were their only nourishment, and the springs of the mountains allayed their thirst; on the fourth morning, Isabel sprung lightly from the rock on which they had rested, and mounting a rising projection, she clasped her hands together, I see, I behold, cried she, that loved retreat; ah, Lorenzo, still dear, adored Lorenzo, ignorant of the power which snatched thy Isabel away, ignorant of her fate, still dost thou linger there.; come, continued she, catching the arm of Leonora, let us hasten, my sweet friend, let us descend to the vale of St. Trinidad, I can at least ensure you the shelter of an humble roof.

They began to descend, Isabel continually first, was often obliged to return, and aid Leonora, who was refused to the mountains

mountains she was obliged to climb for her safety; by degrees the path became more easy, and they found themselves imperceptibly in the valley; ten thousand natural beauties attracted the notice of Leonora, and exhilarated her spirits, the tall embowering shades of the spreading trees, sheltered them from the rays of the meridian sun; beneath their feet, sprung a delightful verdure, rendered yet more lovely, by the contrast of the brown heath, which covered the barren mountain they had just quitted; the farther they advanced, the more the valley bore the marks of cultivation, luxuriant branches bowed before them, loaded with the choicest gifts of Pomona, the clustering grape was diversified with the vivid glow of the woodbine, and the transcendant white of the jessamine, whose balmy sweets diffused a grateful fragrance. Isabel could not allow her delightful companion time to admire these various beauties, but hurried her down a narrow slope, the en-

trance of which, was almost impervious to the eye, and the thickness of the shade, excluded nearly the light of day; near the end, stood a young man, his arms folded, his eyes bent on the ground, despair and haggard wildness had made evident depredations on a form almost unequalled; the instant Isabel perceived him, she rushed forwards, Lorenzo, my beloved Lorenzo! Scarce knowing what he did, he extended his arms time enough to receive the fainting Isabel; silent agony seemed rending his heart, he gazed at her, he lifted his eyes to heaven, he groaned, and the big tear rolled down his manly cheek; she moved, and returning life began to animate her faded form; the Spaniard's eyes were rivetted upon her; and is this, said he, all that remains of my once beloved Isabel; ah, why appear before me in the form of distress, in any other shape, resentment had been my friend; talk not of resentment, feebly articulated the lovely Isabel; much deceived

ceived Lorenzo, extend thy pity but a little farther, and the last scene will close for ever. Heaven has given me strength, heaven has aided me to penetrate my prison walls, to fall before my husband's feet, implore his pardon for all the anxiety I have caused him, and sink to everlasting rest. Natural generosity, love and rigid honour, were evidently at war in the breast of Lorenzo; at length the former prevailed, and Leonora aided the almost expiring Isabella to reach her once happy habitation; in about an hour, she grew more composed, and pressing the hand of Leonora to her lips, excuse me, said she, all the distress your tender nature renders you susceptible of, my fortitude was exhausted, I cannot yet command myself, to give you a perfect narrative; but seek my husband, calm his disordered spirits, and tell him Isabel is innocent, yes, Leonora, affirm it with confidence, I could not deceive you.

F 5.

Leonora.

Leonora had no doubts, she made no scruples, but like an angel of benignity, flew to seek the wretched Lorenzo; he was sitting in an outer apartment, his hands clenched to his forehead, deep groans issuing from his breast, and his whole frame convulsed; he started, and gazed wildly at Leonora; she took one of his hands, Don Lorenzo, said she, suffer me to address you, suffer me to carry consolation to the afflicted Isabel, permit me to say you will see, and will listen to her; never, exclaimed he vehemently, I cannot, coward that I am, avenge my injured honour; but I will not see her, let her retire, and end her wretched days, far from the miserable Lorenzo, who swears—ah, interrupted Leonora, swear not, Don Lorenzo, till you have heard the lovely Isabel, she cannot deceive, turn not away, I will petition for her, thus lowly on my knees, I will intreat, reject her not unheard; and who art thou, wildly returned Lorenzo? Hast thou, like her, first violated

lated the nuptial vow, and then turned apostate to the holy house of God?

To think her guilty, roused the indignation of Leonora, the pride of conscious innocence, glowed on her cheek as the rose; I cease, Don Lorenzo, said she, to importune you, but know, that the queen of Leon is equally wretched, but equally innocent, as thy once loved Isabel.

The haughty Spaniard felt abashed, by the dignity which Leonora assumed, and she pursued her advantage; go, impetrate man, leave the vilified, the traduced Isabel to my care, I know not yet her sad tale; but the one short sentence, "I am innocent," has stamped itself in such indelible marks on my soul, that I will never abandon her; even if guilty, she would merit all my attention, she stretched the pitying arm of friendship, to sooth my harrassed frame, she saved me from death, torment and dishonour, and I will consecrate my liberty to her.

Don Lorenzo's passions were all at war, some mighty secret seemed labouring in his breast; at length, respectfully bowing on the hand of Leonora, excuse, madam, said he, the emotions of a wounded spirit, I will endeavour to copy the virtuous example you hold forth, for imitation; I will listen to Donna Isabel, ere I bid her farewell for ever; but it cannot be at this moment, to-morrow I shall be more composed. Leonora, satisfied with this assurance, returned to Isabel, and related their conference, she embraced Leonora; he will hear me, said she, and we shall again be happy; and now, continued the fair wife of Lorenzo, I will endeavour to convince you, that your generous justification has not been exerted in behalf of one unworthy your esteem. I am called Isabel De Segevia, and my family one of the oldest in the mountains of Leon; my father had from his earliest years been used to seclusion. The infidels
possessed

possessed a considerable greater extent of power, than they do at present; but in common, with other brave knights, whose castles like ours hung over the airy brow of the mountains, he sometimes made incursions into the Moorish territories, and seldom returned without spoils and captives; in one of these sallies, ere he had attained his twentieth year, he surprised a family of some distinction, consisting of a young lady, her father, mother, and several attendants; her father was severely wounded, and the filial grief of the charming Moor, fascinated the attention of Don Gomez, he ordered them all to be conveyed to his castle, and shared the unremitting attention, which Moraine paid to her father; he watched by his couch, he anticipated every wish, but in a few days all their cares proved vain, the noble Moor was speechless for many hours, and the last effort he made, was to place the hand of the weeping Moraine, in that of

Don

Don Gomez; she had already gained the first place in his esteem, and he received her as an unexpected treasure; when he perceived that all was over, he led the distressed mourners to another apartment, he did not attempt at first to offer consolation, but contented himself with paying them every respectful attention; he gave the body to the attendants, and permitted them to depart with it, for Granada. After their first transports had subsided, Don Gomez began to pay assiduous court to Moraine, and succeeded so well, that all thoughts of her returning to Granada were forgot, her mother and herself were baptized, and Don Gomez received the hand of the amiable new christian; the first disturbance to their peaceful union, was the assassination of Alphonso, with whom my father, when a boy, was bred up in habits of the strictest friendship, unable to cringe before the usurper, he retired in disgust, and shut up himself and family, entirely in his castle, hunting in
the

the mountains became his only solace, and his active mind, wanting objects to call forth its native vigour, became listless and gloomy, he shunned society, and at times was morose, and sternly cruel. My mother died, when I had attained my twelfth year; I felt her loss severely, she had always softened my father's peculiarity, but though she had taught me, to reverence and respect him, yet I loved but her alone; the death of his still loved Moraine, awakened the dormant feelings of Don Gomez; he sent for me, he strained me to his bosom, and mingled his tears with mine; from that time, he took pleasure in my society, he taught me to ride, I accompanied him every morning to the chace, and every evening he instructed me in some science; for three years, my life passed thus. One fatal day, my father's eagerness in pursuit of his game, carried him far before me, my horse suddenly took fright, and ran off with me, I endeavoured to rein him in, but in vain,
and

and perceiving him make towards a frightful precipice, I threw myself off, and in the same moment, the animal dashed headlong over the rock, and was crushed to atoms; terror made me unable to move, and I lay reclined on the ground, almost without sense; a party of hunters passed me, and a young man, which appeared their chief, alighted, and raised me from the ground; I gazed wildly at him, I articulated my father, and burst into tears; they relieved my agonizing sensations, and I gently withdrew from the support of the stranger, but through weakness I found myself unable to walk without aid, and I could not refuse it when proffered by him; my father overtook us before we reached the castle, he had been anxiously seeking me, and overwhelmed the cavalier with his acknowledgements, insisting he should enter, and pass the night. Lorenzo (for it was he) acquitted himself so well, that Don Gomez was delighted with his conversation and manners, and for the first time:

time I beheld my dear father tolerably cheerful; when our guest had retired, I as usual bade my father good night, he tenderly kissed me, and said a good night to my sweet Isabel; would to heaven the birth of this stranger may answer his external appearance, I should die in peace wert thou the wife of such a man.

An unusual blush suffused my cheek, I curstied and retired, rest fled far from me, and my whole imagination rested on Don Lorenzo, my father admired him, my father wished to find him in every respect worthy of our alliance, could it then be improper for me, to indulge favourable thoughts of him? In fine, dear madam, before day I had reasoned myself into the belief, that by being partial to Don Lorenzo, I was acting highly laudable; the next morning I met him in the gallery; I sought you, Donna Isabel, said he, with a graceful bow, propriety will not admit me as a stranger, to remain long the guest of
Don

Don Gomez, nor would it be generous, with the feelings which actuate my soul; excuse so abrupt a declaration; but necessity impels me, your charms have made an impression, which it will constitute the felicity or misery of my life, to cherish a return of love, I cannot so early, consistent with delicacy or reason, ask for; but only permit me, if no other object has obtained a preference, to solicit your father, and sanctioned by him, endeavour to gain, at a future period, your affections. I was silent, Leonora; but Don Lorenzo was not such a novice, as to misinterpret my blushing confusion; I saw by his looks he was not dissatisfied, and he obtained a tacit consent to consult my father. I withdrew after dinner, and remained in the gallery where we had met in the morning, in a state of disagreeable perturbation; I did not imagine my father would refuse him, and yet I felt as if some impending misery was ready to burst over my head; I walked to and fro, I contemplated the
view

view from every window, I measured back my solitary paces, I listened to every noise, but no one, disturbed my meditation ; a trampling of horses in the court of the castle made me run to the window ; but ah, Leonora, imagine the distress, which the sudden vanishing of all my air born hopes must occasion to a mind like mine, unused to disappointment, when I beheld Lorenzo mount his horse, and pass the draw-bridge, he turned round and looked up at the window, his countenance bore the evident marks of chagrin, but he forced a smile at the sight of me, bowed and disappeared ; like a child I burst into an agony of tears, and had scarce time to conquer a little my bitter emotions, ere my father sent for me, he was evidently displeased ; Isabel, said he, without looking at me, I hope my foolish fondness last night, and the unguarded expression made use of, has had no improper influence on your inexperienced mind ; I again repeat, I admired Don
Lorenzo,

Lorenzo, and had formed my ideas in consequence—but no matter——

He has made proposals to me, for permission to address you; I cannot say I heard them with disgust, nay, I gave him reason to hope for a favourable issue; but hoped his family were such that mine would not disdain the alliance. Mistaken youth, his eyes sparkled with pleasure, and he answered, no, Don Gomez, the son of Don Garcias D'Oviedo need not scruple to own his descent; a thunder-clap, my daughter, had been more welcome. Don Garcias is the object of my contempt and hatred, we were ever rivals in war, and his firm adherence to the accursed murderer of my king, has made his name detestable to my ears, I could not conceal my rancour from his son; but although impassioned, I could not be unjust, I never lost sight of the distinction due to Lorenzo, as the preserver of my daughter, and that his virtues of themselves

selfes must always merit, he knew my sentiments, and we separated for ever.

Don Gomez might have talked for some time, I was incapable of either listening or replying, and never received permission to retire more willingly; melancholy, in spite of all my endeavours to check it, spread its gloomy veil over my countenance, my father saw it with evident displeasure, and took me no more to the chace, the gardens were the limits of my walk; but I wanted no indulgence, I sought for no amusements, my days were all an empty void, nothing gave either pleasure or pain. My father had left the castle some days, and was gone to Segovia, when one of the servants came eagerly in search of me, and told me a friend of my father's must speak to me immediately; imagination pictured my father dead or dying, ten thousand thoughts arose to torment me, and Lorenzo was totally banished; I ran, breathless, with
haste

haste through the garden ; but on throwing open the door of the saloon, and beholding Lorenzo himself at my feet, I was obliged to lean against one of the pillars for support, he intreated my pardon for the alarm he had occasioned me, and assured me, nothing but the dread of losing me for ever, could have induced him to take such a liberty. When I had recovered my fright, he told me again all that had passed, between him and Don Gomez, and assured me, the only purpose of his visit, was to know from me, whether there was any possibility of overcoming the inflexibility of my father's nature ; I could not flatter him with the smallest degree of probability, he bade me adieu, he rose to go, he returned again, and I know not how, but ere we separated, he had drawn from me an avowal of mutual love ; no sooner had it passed my lips, and Lorenzo out of sight, than I felt the impropriety of which I had been guilty ; what could I propose to myself
by

by such conduct, but unceasing misery, should my father intend another husband for me—my very soul revolted at the thought—would I then wish myself united to Lorenzo against his consent; ah, no, the image of my fainted mother, seemed to chide the supposition. That very evening my father returned, my resolution was fixed, I had erred, and I owed some sacrifice to duty, I fell at his feet, I laid my heart open before him, told him of Lorenzo's visit, of all that had occurred, and threw myself on his generosity.

Don Gomez was affected, he raised me in his arms, your candour, Isabel, has obliterated every trace of resentment, aware that Lorenzo was concealed near the castle, I pretended a journey to Segovia, but I have not quitted the mountains; my orders facilitated your interview, Don Lorenzo is my prisoner, and I was prepared to pass a final sentence on ye both; but your conduct deserves some lenity,

lenity, and as I have no reason to doubt either your fortitude or obedience, remain here, and behold my enemy. I was nearly dying with terror, Don Gomez supported me in his arms, and I beheld my beloved Lorenzo led into the room by two soldiers, my father upbraided him with his breach of hospitality, and pointing to me, why, continued he, did you restore me my daughter, to make the wounds she inflicts through your means, the more grievous; even now love and duty are at war in her inexperienced bosom; ah, ill-fated Isabel, art thou the destined instrument of all righteous vengeance; but I will bear my sorrows as a man; hear me, said he, more sternly, if you are at this moment repentant of the confidence placed in me, if you prefer Don Lorenzo to your father, I give him liberty and you also; but from that moment, I have no more a child; unable to divine the motive of Don Gomez, and equally unable to support his anger, I faintly articulated, my father—
my

my—and dropped at his feet ; for many days I lay in a state of insensibility, which was succeeded by a violent fever ; my father watched me with unremitting tenderness, but as soon as I was pronounced out of danger, I saw him no more ; his place was occupied by a duenna , whose watchful care would, had it been possible, have directed my very looks ; unaccustomed from my earliest infancy, to a restraint of that nature, I was extremely uneasy, and did not fail to remonstrate with my disagreeable attendant ; but finding I could gain nothing but reproaches from her, I observed a strict silence ; she led me one morning into the balcony, for air, which balcony communicated with my father's library, the duenna assured me he was not there, and persuaded me, much against my will, to pass a little time there, to vary the scene ; she left me alone near half an hour, and when she returned, said, with an exulting voice, see how I study to deserve your love and friendship, pointing

G

ing

ing at the same time to Don Lorenzo, who followed her; I gave her a look of rage, and was preparing to fly, but he stopped me, he held me by the robe, and supplicated me to hear him; could I, dear Isabel, said he, resist the tempting offer of again beholding you, of expressing at your feet my regret, for your sufferings, and my eternal adoration? Ah, whilst we have still the means, let us fly together—Rash Lorenzo, interrupted I, is this your regard, is this your high sense of honour; ought a Spaniard, who prides himself on his birth, and his delicate ideas of female rectitude, take to his arms a woman who has just trampled under foot every sense of filial duty? What dependence could you place upon me, when the first impulse of passion should be satisfied, your life would be a prey to never ending jealousy. Lorenzo said a great deal to extenuate his conduct, swore the proposal arose, solely from the dread of losing me for ever; you are perhaps a stranger, added he, to your father's

father's intentions, he means to see you to-morrow, and at the same instant bestow your hand on Guzman Del Torres, or shut you for ever from the world. The blow was violent, my Leonora; but I inherited my father's inflexibility; once satisfied I was right, no consideration could make me lose sight of my purpose, I struggled for a few moments, my duenna seconded the proposal of Don Lorenzo, this gave me back my ebbing spirits.

Wretch begone, I exclaimed, nor presume to appear again in my presence; if Don Gomez had not a better security in the integrity of his daughter, than thy fidelity, he might soon repent his implicit dependence on thy weak and fordid mind; and you, Don Lorenzo, receive my eternal adieu; yet, if it will in the least mitigate your sorrows, be assured that, as Don Gomez generously designs me an alternative, I will never be the wife of Guzman Del Torres. As I passed Don

Lorenzo, I held out my hand to him, he pressed it to his bosom, he fixed his eyes on me, with a sweet and mournful expression; mine were suffused with tears, and I brake from him; but ere I reached the door, it was thrown open, and my father stood before me; the conflict I had just passed, and the sudden surprise, was too much for my debilitated frame, and I should have fallen to the ground, if Don Lorenzo had not caught me; I soon revived, I was amazed at the calm around, I opened my eyes, Don Lorenzo yet held me, and my father was gazing at me with solicitude, but I could discern no trace of anger; he took my hand, Isabel, said he, my beloved child, forgive this hard trial of thy sincerity and duty, I will not be outdone in generosity; I planned this interview, that I might learn whether your avowed love for Don Lorenzo, was of that wild romantic cast, that would authorize opposition; but you have nobly triumphed, Isabel; come to my arms, receive

ceive a father's paternal blessing; he embraced me, and then added, I resign you to Don Lorenzo; we both stood amazed, we could scarce credit the evidence of our senses; but my father joining our hands, convinced us of the truth, by this noble confession of his former error.

From the moment I first beheld Don Lorenzo, I wished him to prove worthy of being my son-in-law, our sequestered way of life, had so effectually broken all my youthful connections, that I know not an alliance proper for my daughter, and I determined rather to compel her to enter a cloister, than she should, by being left an orphan, become the ward of the accursed Sancho; the mention of his family, revived all my ancient prejudices, and I forgot his own virtues, and the services I owed him. A short time after his departure, I received a courier from Don Garcia, informing me he was no stranger to what had passed, generously offering to

cancel all resentment, either private or political, and meet me on equal grounds as a friend, and if I acquiesced, a future relative ; but adding, he thought himself in honour bound to inform me, that his son was still in the mountains of Leon, and that he dreaded the event from his undaunted spirit, and enthusiastic love ; this nobleman's conduct made me severely inspect my own, I found I had acted unworthily, but yet I was willing to ascertain, whether ye were both deserving of happiness, I have waited the result with trembling anxiety, I now recant every error, renounce every prejudice (except that, if I can call it such, which confirms my eternal hatred to Sancho) and cheerfully bestow my daughter, on the only man, that in my opinion can deserve her ; we both fell at his feet, he raised us up ; live my children, happy and united, to bless the declining years of your parent ; we were very soon after married, and every day seemed to bring increasing love, and

and peace to our abode. Lorenzo often regretted his inaction, but no persuasions could induce my father to part with him; he often went himself to Segovia, and not long since, after a shorter absence than usual, he returned; as he entered, he passed us both, and taking down his shield, and long neglected lance, once more, exclaimed he, with enthusiasm, once more shall Gomez provoke the rage of battle; yes, spirit of the great Alphonso, the holy flame is lighted, and generous Spaniards will avenge thy wrongs. Amazement seized me; Lorenzo, continued he, thou hast heard how brave Mendoza fell a victim to secret, and it was feared domestic treachery; but he has left a son, the very image of Alphonso (for I once beheld him) the ancient genius of Spain rises in Don Carlos, and he shall conquer; already has he snatched his mother from the pile of infamy, vanquished the Moors, and awed our savage tyrant, his hostile banners wave in ambient air, and by our

holy patron, I will lead my faithful few to join him; anxiety and dread took immediate possession of my soul. Lorenzo sighed, my father took his hand, brave youth, continued he, I understand that sigh, and lament the destiny which dooms you to inaction, you must not draw the sword against your father, join him, and pierce the parent of your much loved Isabel; Lorenzo's high opinion of Don Carlos, would never have constituted him his enemy; but he wished to do more, he wished to be his friend, and obtained a willing consent from Don Gomez, to go immediately to Leon, and endeavour to prevail with his father, to bring his forces to join Don Carlos. I was obliged to stifle my unavailing regret, and seem interested in their ardour; my father summoned to his standard all his ancient vassals, and those of his own household, who had oft in youth witnessed his glory, all seemed to partake their leader's zeal, and a short time left me bereaved of all I loved,

loved, my only consolation was walking to the ridge of the mountains, from whence I could discern the road, where I had watched their progress, and lost sight of them, whom I loved beyond my existence.

Several days, a stranger had incessantly crossed my path, he bore indelible marks of sickness, or contemplative melancholy in his pale face, and as he never accosted me, I thought but little of him; but preparing one fine summer morning for my accustomed ramble, I was stopped on the draw-bridge by Francisco, an old steward of my father's, and whom, from my infancy, I had been taught to esteem, he was visibly concerned; will you, my dear young lady, said he, return into the castle, and give a patient hearing to an old man's fears; I complied most readily, and he enquired if I had seen a stranger lately, and whether I knew him; upon my answering I had met such a person,

son, but had not the smallest knowledge of him.

The old man thus continued, not far from hence, my dear lady, is a castle belonging to the king, it has been preserved as a check to the disaffected nobles, many of which are known to be sheltered in these mountains; the Count de Carma, principal favourite of Sancho, being in disgrace with his master, retired to this castle, where he has been some time, and the king it seems, fearful of being driven from Leon, by Don Carlos's friends, is come here in disguise, and has reconciled himself to the Count; passing by our garden wall last night, they stopped to note the castle, and I, concealed by a hedge, overheard their infernal purpose; Sancho execrated your father, for the support he had given Don Carlos, and swore, before he quitted the mountains, he would see his proud castle in the dust. Gonsalvez laughed at his fury, and told him there

was

was a far more signal means of vengeance, and mentioned you; the tyrant started, well thought of, De Carma; yes, she shall be mine, I will sting her father with dishonour, and swore, ere three days had elapsed, revenge should have her fill; we have, alas, no force to cope with them; your husband Don Lorenzo is far away, nothing can save you but immediate flight. I made Francisco repeat every circumstance his memory could retain, and concluded the man I had seen, must be the vile De Carma, him it surely was; narrowly as he had escaped from the momentary rage of Sancho, yet he was already willing to aid him in new exploits; I saw the necessity I was under, of secreting myself from the impending danger, and advised with my only friend; he promised to guide me on the following night, to a secure asylum, and we employed the rest of that day, in securing my father's treasure, which we buried in the garden, and I retired to take a short repose, ere I

encountered fresh fatigue; the next morning, at day break, I received a summon from Sancho, addressed to my father, branding him with the name of rebel, and commanding the castle to be surrendered at discretion. I returned him, in the name of my father, a proper defiance, and as soon as night fell o'er the earth, quitted my home under the guidance of Francisco, he brought me here, he left me in this hermitage, and set forwards to find my husband, or my father; my dear Lorenzo came to me in about ten days, he embraced me in a transport, and told me he had every hope, his father would take the first opportunity of breaking with the tyrant, he told me all the events which had taken place, and I could scarce restrain him, from flying immediately in search of my persecutor. He staid with me only three short days, but promised to return ere long, and take me to his father; ah, madam, these three days in this delightful vale, were days indeed of love.

and

I saw

I saw him depart with anguish unknown before, a foreboding seemed to whisper, it would be long, very long ere we met in peace and happiness again; I abandoned myself to the bitterest woe, I shed tears incessantly, and grew so timorous, that I scarce dared to venture beyond the gate of my little abode; an old shepherd, whom Francisco had known many years, and could safely trust, was the only person I saw, he came daily to bring me subsistence, very little of which sufficed, for life itself was almost insupportable. About a week after the absence of Don Lorenzo, I was alarmed one night rather late, by a loud knocking below, and several voices calling for assistance; terrified to death, I opened the lattice, and demanded who was there; the tumult ceased, and one advancing before the rest, intreated me not to be alarmed; but they were impelled by necessity, to task my hospitality in behalf of a wounded knight; we were, madam, continued the speaker, conveying him

him to his own castle, but the motion has caused his wounds to bleed afresh, and unless you have the humanity to receive us, he will inevitably perish. I waited for no more, my own sense of danger vanished, and I hastened to admit them; but what were my sensations, on beholding in the man that spoke to me, that very individual De Carma, to whose detested councils, I owed my intended ruin; his countenance betrayed no change, and I vainly flattered myself, he did not recollect me; I soon found the wounded knight was no other than Sancho himself. They had a surgeon amongst their retinue, and as his wounds were none of them dangerous, in two days he was able to travel, and requested permission to thank his fair hostess. I knew myself too much in their power to deny seeing him, and followed the messenger.

Lady, said the usurper, the Count De Carma informs me, you are daughter to
Don

Don Gomez de Segovia; I have many and infinite obligations to your father, and shall with pleasure repay them to you; this abode is not a fit habitation for the peerless Isabel, so nearly allied to those hoary traitors, Gomez and Garcia; you shall attend on us, my fair one, and leave these rural beauties.

The air with which this speech was delivered, and the malicious smile, which played on the countenance of De Carma, let me see at once, the full extent of my misery; I stood like one transfixed, they had the cruelty to laugh at my distress, and Sancho turning to Gonsalvez, demanded to read the letter he had written, to leave behind, for, continued the crafty villain, we must not let the youthful lord despair, if chance should bring him in search of his fair turtle.

De Carma gave him the accursed letter, which ran thus:

“ DO

"DO not, Don Lorenzo, too much regret the loss of one, that bowed once eternal constancy; but let the generous pride of his heart, rather stimulate him to forget an ungrateful woman; my truth need not be doubted, and especially in these my last moments, when I seal it with my blood, yes, too greatly wronged Lorenzo, the infamous daughter of Don Gomez at this moment revels in the tyrant's smiles. I can no more, I grow faint—my murderers come, adieu,

FRANCISCO."

Gracious God, I exclaimed, roused from my stupor, dost thou indeed suffer such crimes to take effect, do not these men of guilt, expect the lightening of thy arm will blast them in the midst of vice! Ah, interpose, and save the wretched Isabel, I ask not for life; but all I ask is, that I may die unblemished.

Sancho

Sancho would hear no more, but commanded De Carma to seize and place me in the litter, which he was to go in himself; in vain I shrieked, and cried aloud for help, in that moment neither man nor God was nigh; in the outer room I beheld the mangled corpse of good old Francisco. At the horrid sight, I uttered a piercing shriek, and became unconscious of all around me; how long I remained in that situation I do not know; but the woman which attended me, said, above a day. I found myself in a magnificent apartment, surrounded by many attendants, who seemed all eager to attend me; I enquired where I was, and they told me in a house belonging to the Count De Carma, who had ordered them to comply with every wish of mine.

I shook my head, alas, this pomp and elegance, was a refinement on their ingenious cruelty. For some time I suffered all the tortures, vice could put in practice, obliged

obliged by force to appear, bound in a chair, constrained to listen to discourse, which made virtue shudder, or exposed to bitter, contumely and reproachful malice ; but the crisis of my fate was at hand, De Carma made a great banquet, at which, for the first time, I saw the Countess De Carma, and soon found that she was like myself a prisoner ; mild benignity and suffering patience characterized her countenance ; as she looked at me, the tear of pity trembled in her eye, De Carma spoke to her, what he said I did not hear, but it seemed of a harsh nature. The king and his retinue were present, all restraint was banished, and De Carma and his master gave way to intemperance.

The Countess, with some difficulty, obtained permission to retire, and her place was instantly supplied by several wantons ; I burst into tears, I intreated to be suffered to go to my apartment ; ah, Leonora, what was my situation, these wretches
were

were permitted to insult me, and I was obliged to dissemble; the monster affected to pity me, and exultingly told De Carma, they must bring Leonora thither, though he much questioned, whether she looked more beautiful in tears, than the peerless Isabel; but however, added he, with a brutal smile, I will for once be moved to pity, and shorten the term of probation; here, continued he, addressing me, and drawing out a dagger, first shall you be honoured with my embraces, and then behold your friend; ah, I exclaimed, for pity's sake give it me; let my own hand strike the wished-for blow; but do not, do not sport with anguish like mine!

No more trifling, exclaimed he, in a voice that still seems to sound in my ear; death alone would be too mild a punishment, when in thee I punish traitors; he seized me, Leonora; ah, at that moment, heaven itself doubtless intervened, an
a'arm

alarm seemed to pervade the whole house, and an officer, rushing into the apartment, exclaimed, to horse my lords, arm, the friends of Don Carlos arm, they demand him, Alvarez at their head, threatens the lofty towers of Saragossa, and all Spain seems determined to revolt ! The tyrant started, he unloosed me from his grasp, he poured out curses against them all, and turning to De Carma, fly then, cried he, instantly to the castle of St. Joseph, lay it in ashes, stretch all that it incloses on the rack, rather than let them regain their liberty, whilst I hasten to call together some chosen bands ; for thee, cried he, turning to me, and snatching up the dagger, this shall secure thee ; but that would end thy torments, live then till I return, triumphant live in all the horrors of suspense.

The gaudy banquet now gave place to the greatest confusion, all was hurry and alarm, my persecutors quitted the house,

and

and for the first time since I entered it, I enjoyed a calm repose; this lasted three days; on the fourth I observed my attendants whispering together, and at length one of the mildest, and most attentive, said, be comforted, dear lady, we hope your sufferings are nearly ended; I betrayed much surprise at such news, and she continued to relate, that the Count De Carma, instead of complying with the orders of his master, had gone straight to a place, where he detained a beautiful young lady, with whom Sancho and himself were equally enamoured, that by some means the king had heard of it, and pursued him, had taken the lady from him, and not daring to punish Gonsalvez, in this moment of alarm, had sent him to the army at Saragossa; our lady now, continued the kind female, can probably assist you, she wishes to see you. I instantly followed my conductor, the Countess De Carma received me most affectionately, she was interested for me; but
-alas,

alas, she was herself a prisoner, she heard my tale of woe, she gave me sigh for sigh, and tear for tear, she execrated the tyrant's cruelty, but not a word did this excellent woman breathe against her husband; various were the schemes we planned for my escape, but the vigilance of the Count's domestics rendered all abortive, and reduced me to an agony of despair; alas, I cried, most virtuous amongst women, have pity on my wretchedness, think that if ever suicide was pardonable, it must be now; give me some means of death, by thy own unspotted fame, by all that woman holds most dear, I do conjure you to aid my wishes; she paused—and drawing forth a dagger, take it Isabel, she cried, but let me in my turn conjure thee, let necessity alone drive thee to make use of it, remember, reason and religion alike forbid *self-murder*, keep that strongly imprinted on thy soul, and let the impulse of the moment be thy dictate, perhaps

perhaps a little courage may awe even Sancho's guilty soul.

I thanked her in a transport, and eagerly hid my inestimable treasure; I retired to my own apartment, and began to meditate on all the coming horrors; a gentle noise alarmed me, I started, my door opened, I gave myself for lost, and felt for my friendly dagger; but all my fears subsided, when I beheld the Countess De Carma; I could not, said she, resist asking you, if you have courage at this late hour to attempt escaping; a sudden thought has struck me, and perhaps we may accomplish it—name it, my dear lady—here then, continued she, take this billet, it is addressed to the abbess of St. Adeline, a monastery close by our walls, you cannot escape farther; but their shrine will be a sanctuary I think Sancho will not presume to violate; we must now descend to one of the passages leading to the garden, of which I have the key,
under

under favour of the darkness, we must conceal ourselves, till the moment in which the guards are changed; during the hurry naturally attending that instant, you may probably pass the gate, that once done, may providence assist you.

Little as I should have, upon reflection, thought this scheme was practicable, yet at such a crisis, when I was nearly lost in the abyss of despair, I thought it carried with it the certainty of success, I embraced the knees of my guardian angel; but she gently checked my raptures, and taking my hand, led me through so many intricate passages, that without such a guide, I could never have succeeded; we at last saw the wished-for door, and heard the tread of the weary centinel, the countess put out her lamp, and gave me the key; I will stay, said she, till you have opened the door, for, if detected, my presence will certainly protect you from insult; we waited two hours in that perturbation, unfortunate

fortunate captives on the brink of emancipation, can alone feel; at length we heard the guard, they met to relieve each other, nearer to where we stood than the Countess De Carma had imagined; the moon at that juncture burst from a sable cloud, and shining full upon us, discovered to the view of the astonished soldier, two female figures, covered from head to foot, with long white veils; fear seized upon the coward, and, instead of stopping to know what, or who we were, he rushed forward to meet the expected relief, and raise a general alarm; heaven, my dear Isabel, said my amiable friend, interests itself for you; I will return instantly to my chamber; profit by this alarm and farewell; I instantly unlocked the gate which I closed after me, and found myself in the garden; I hastened through it, and fear aiding both my strength and resolution, I climbed the wall which separated it from the outer court of the monastery; I found some trees nailed against the wall, on the

H

other

other side, which aided my descent; but, being agitated and afraid of being overtaken, my foot slipped, and I fell a considerable height, the portress, who was just arisen to matins, heard a shriek I gave as I fell, and hastened to the spot, I was almost insensible with fear and pain; but I had sufficient reason left, to beg immediate admittance, she led or rather carried me to her room, and rung the bell, within a nun answered, but refused to open the gates till day light; ah, my God, I exclaimed in the bitterness of my soul, is this their charity, is it thus they copy thy benevolence! This unguarded speech was not lost, nor was it ever forgiven.

I recollected in this moment of anguish, the countess's billet, and I desired it might be instantly given to the superior, the promise of reward which it contained, operated like magic, and I soon heard the admission bell, the sound seemed to renew my strength, and with assistance I got within

within the dreadful walls. I was met at the gate by the superior, and all her community, in low accents they welcomed me amongst them, and the superior ceremoniously embracing me, supported me round the waist to the church door; return thanks my daughter, said she, to that God, who has directed your wandering steps to his altar; alas, my mother, cried I, faintly, I cannot stand; she led me to the altar, withdrew her support, and I fell; it is a good omen, said she, to the surrounding nuns, we must have this dear child among us, this awe in the presence of her God is delightful; she then directed two nuns to lead me to an apartment, we passed the cloisters of this dismal abode, and the two friendly nuns, who were benevolence itself, kindly soothed my woe, applied remedies to my bruises, and left me to take the repose I really needed; but curiosity is more particularly inherent, I believe to the cloister; the superior and the heads of the house, hurried over their

matins, and came into the cell; the moment my friendly assistants had left me, without enquiring how I found myself, she sat down by the bedside, and thus addressed me; we owe much to the piety and good intentions of the Countess De Carma; but the incoherent manner in which she writes, the manner in which you entered the court of our house, and your evident fears of pursuit, induce us to wish for some explanation; be candid, my dear child, consider me as your indulgent mother, and these respectable sisters as your own, we know human nature is subject to frailties, and our office is to console, and bring back the repentant soul to heaven, secure with us, direct all your attentions thither, and be assured within these walls, the Count de Carma (if it is from him you fly) has no power.

I felt assured by this declaration; but hurt at the imputation of guilt, I therefore, without hesitation, related my whole story.

I saw

I saw many significant glances pass between them, during the narration, and many exclamations of Jesu, Maria ; heavens, what wickedness broke in upon me. When I had ended, they were in visible confusion, and retired to consult what was to be done ; the result of it, was to watch me very narrowly, and use every persuasion to make me forget Lorenzo, and take the veil, this was their public proceeding ; but dreading the power of Sancho, they secretly sent a messenger, to tell him I was protected from his lawless violence, by their holy sanctuary ; but requesting at the same time, his orders how to dispose of me within their walls. Sancho was soon there, he used every art of menace, bribery and persuasion, to induce them to give me up ; but the superior convinced him she dared not ; a latent principle of rectitude, and a dread of censure, hindered her compliance, although she trembled before the tyrant. He desired to see me, and I was forced to the grate, he loaded

me with the most bitter invectives, and charged the nuns, as they feared his displeasure, to shut me for the remainder of my days, in one of the gloomy caverns, where they punished disobedient sisters, and he swore if they complied not, he would violate their holy sanctuary, and tear me from the very altar; intimidated by his threats, and instigated by a rich diamond he presented the superior, as he retired, she immediately plunged me in that cave of horrors, where you found me; I was, as I said before, some days in absolute despair, the benevolent nuns that first assisted me, did not now desert me, they watched over me with real affection, and at length told me they had prevailed so far over the fears of their superior, that she had promised, if I would enter the community, that she would aid to deceive Sancho, by reporting me dead; they persuaded me to enter the noviciate and adopt the habit; heaven knows I never misled them by consenting; but they attired me, they

they did with me what they would, and after the first ceremonies were over, I began to reflect upon the critical situation I was once more placed in, reason reassumed her empire, and prompted me to avoid, if possible, the snare laid for my present peace and future happiness.

I examined every corner of my cave, at length found some of the large stones were loose; with pain and difficulty I removed them, and to my inexpressible joy, found time had so much mouldered the wall, beyond these stones, that I could easily remove it. For five weeks I laboured to complete this opening, which the stones on the inside effectually hid from observation; at last I succeeded, and boldly explored the cavern; ah, with what heartfelt joy, did I prostrate myself on the ground at its entrance, how fervent were my thanks to providence; but I could not then put my design in execution, as I knew it was some distance from

the vale of St. Trinidad, and that some little provision for the journey would be indispensably necessary; in the meantime, I had the good fortune to assist you, madam, which will ever cast a ray of comfort over my gloomy sorrows.

Leonora tenderly embraced the lovely Isabel, and left her to compose her spirits, the moon was newly risen, and the lovely fugitive descended into the vale, to enjoy its wonderous beauties, the stillness of the evening, the perfume exhaled from the flowers, and the silver rays of the mild planet of the night, diffused a delicious calm over her sad bosom; she stood a few moments, contemplating the scenes around her; ah, sighed she, how little do I covet the distinction of power, this vale with Don Carlos, would be a paradise, yet it is some comfort to imagine that he is not the author of my calamities; ah, no, his last embrace was that of mild returning love; perhaps at this moment he laments
his

his Leonora, and my good, my affectionate mother, how soon has her peace been again disturbed, yet heaven is all-sufficient, murmur not then, ungrateful Leonora, put all thy confidence in thy God, who when he chastens most, then most he loves. As she spoke a man glided by her, she was startled, but soon recollected the unfortunate Lorenzo; he wandered like a discontented ghost, which, repulsed by the inexorable Charon from the waters of the Styx, yet hovers in view of that elysium, he scarcely hopes to reach; thus Lorenzo stood gazing at intervals towards the chamber, which contained his still adored Isabel; the trees sheltered him from sight, and she opportunely opened the casement just as Leonora passed, the latter looking up, intreated Isabel to descend, with so much ardour, that she complied, and putting her arm through that of Leonora, walked silently into the grove. Leonora in vain attempted to raise her depressed spirits, tears were all her an-

H 5

swer,

swer, the moon shone upon a grassy tomb ;
alas, exclaimed Isabel, here too probably
rests the remains of worthy Francisco ;
alas, thou venerable man, thy attachment
to the daughter of thy lord, was attended
with fatal consequences. Deceived Lo-
renzo, but why do I say deceived, when
conviction seemed before thine eyes, as
fixed, as holy writ, yet Leonora, you
know my truth, your angelic benevolence
condemned not a wretch unheard, but
listened, wept, and pitied ; she sat down
on the grass, she reclined over the grassy
sod, and Leonora forbore to disturb her
contemplative sadness.

Sudden through a neighbouring thick-
et, rushed Lorenzo, he cast himself at
the feet of Isabel, who uttered a loud
shriek, and gazed upon him with frantic
wildness ; alas, too late was his repentance,
the reason of the unhappy Isabel was lost,
she burst into a convulsive laugh, and
catching both his hands, grasped them in
hers,

hers, exclaiming, I defy thee tyrant, here I hold my friend, I press him to my throbbing bosom, and I defy thee, monster! Lorenzo raised her in his arms, she reclined on his shoulder, and continued, I pray you bear with me, I have suffered a great deal, but indeed I am innocent; she turned hastily round, disengaged herself from Lorenzo, and caught the arm of Leonora, shrieking out, I will not leave you, you are my only friend, my guardian genius——Finding the situation of her mind, the almost distracted Lorenzo, aided by Leonora, conveyed her to the house, she grew by degrees calmer, but knew neither of them; when the grief and confusion, occasioned by this accident, a little subsided, Leonora adverted to her own situation, and Lorenzo proposed sending a trusty Spaniard to Leon, with the tidings of her safety; four days they allowed for him to go express, and return with an answer; but Lorenzo in that interval, told Leonora, that not being able

to find his father, he returned to the vale, as he now conjectured, very few days after Isabel was carried from thence, he found the mangled body of the good old Francisco, and the fatal letter; the first thing he did was to bury the disfigured remains, and yet unwilling to condemn, he traced them to the castle of De Carma, upon enquiring there, the domestics spoke of the Lady Isabel, as the favoured mistress of Sancho, and so far confirmed all his suspicions, that he resolved on some future occasion to take a signal vengeance, but overpowered by grief, illness and fatigue, he was constrained to defer it, and retire to the vale; here, continued he, I have remained two months wholly undisturbed, but heaven has thought fit to punish my incredulity; ah, madam, why had I not like you felt pity, and listened to the sweet sufferer.

He was interrupted by the hasty arrival of one of the shepherds, whom the mildness and benevolence of Lorenzo had attached

tached to his service, he told him, that small detached parties of armed men, were gathering round the vale, and that he feared, ere night closed in, some misfortune would befall them. Lorenzo proposed immediate flight, but Leonora was willing to remain yet a little longer, not without a secret hope that Don Carlos would fly to seek her, and as she justly observed, if they quitted that spot, there could be no clue to guide him; Lorenzo acquiesced to her will, but proposed they should pass the night in a sequestered spot, a small distance from the vale, sheltered behind a rising ground; to this she agreed, and they bore the sad Isabel with them, the faithful shepherd attended them, and watched at intervals; at length he heard a trampling of many horses, the spirits of Leonora took the alarm; ah, heaven, said she, it must be him, my beloved Carlos! Lorenzo pitying her impatience, promised her to go towards the vale, and learn the cause

cause of the alarm, but ere he had quitted the friendly retreat, a sudden blaze rose to the clouds, and discovered the beautiful valley of St. Trinidad a prey to the devouring flames. Lorenzo stopped, horror took possession of his soul; my God, exclaimed he, behold the abode of love destroyed! Ah, Leonora, how fortunate are we, it is not Carlos that seeks his beloved queen, but the fell tyrant whose malicious vengeance——is satisfied, exclaimed Sancho, rushing into the thicket, followed by a band of armed soldiers.

Leonora shrieked, she clung round the unconscious Isabel; whilst Lorenzo in vain attempted to defend them. The dagger of Sancho entered his breast; he fell at the feet of Isabel. The dreadful sight recalled her erring senses, she gazed alternately at Sancho and at her husband; whilst the dying Lorenzo, turning his eyes towards her, faltered out, ah, Isabel! forgive thy wretched husband. All pity-
ing

ing heaven, cried she, lifting up her eyes; I thank thee; yes, I feel that I am beyond the power of human malice; Sancho, farewell; the wife of Lorenzo warns thee that there is a God. — My Lorenzo, ever beloved partner of my heart, receive thy Isabel to an eternal embrace. She hastily kissed the hand of the terrified Leonora, and throwing herself by Lorenzo, clasped him in her arms, and with a deep sigh expired.

Her sigh, or rather groan, startled the tyrant, who had been occupied in giving orders; he looked at her, thou then, cried he, hast escaped my vengeance, but there is one remaining; come, Queen of Léon, said he, with an exulting smile to Leonora, deign once more to grace the humble roof of Sancho. Finding her nearly insensible, he ordered her to be mounted before one of his knights, and safely conveyed to the fortress of St. Joseph. He himself took another road. The way Leonora was carried,

carried, led them unavoidably past the castle from whence she had escaped with Victoria ; she sighed at the remembrance, and the bad success she had derived from it. A hermit was gazing attentively at the walls, but his looks were diverted by their passing. He followed them at a small distance, and Leonora fancied his features were not unknown to her. Complaining of fatigue, her guards halted soon after, and gave her some refreshment, but obliged her to keep on a very thick veil. The hermit still hovered round, and asked alms. The soldiers of Sancho, unfeeling like himself, roughly chid and repulsed the venerable mendicant ; but Leonora was satisfied the hermit was Don Pedro, and demanded aloud of her guard, if his orders were to convey her to the fortress of St. Joseph. He answered in the affirmative, and told her they must proceed without delay.

We

We must now return to Don Carlos. He over-run the greatest part of Spain, without being able to gain the smallest intelligence of Leonora. In vain he offered immense rewards; so retired was the spot chosen by Sancho, that no one could penetrate its recesses, and he was on the point, as his last resource, of laying siege to St. Joseph, when he was met by Don Pedro's esquire, who, charged by his master with so important a commission, rested not till he had found the melancholy Carlos. He told him every particular of his master's love for the queen, which Leonora had herself related to him, and continued the narrative, from the moment of his quitting her, in these words:

“ My master, impressed with the highest sense of the injury he did you in endeavouring to alienate the affections of Donna Leonora, was careless of whatever became of him. I have attended him from his infancy, but all my influence, my persuasions.

suasions were lost, and to his eternal ruin, he met in the garden Donna Aurelia ; that haughty woman, stung with madness (as I have since learnt from one of her women) at the frequent repulse you gave to her licentious passion, had the consummate art to make the distracted Don Pedro believe that she adored him. Penetrated with gratitude, and vainly imagining matrimony to be the best resource against his ill-fated passion, governed entirely by a momentary frenzy, he married Aurelia that very morning. Married Aurelia ! exclaimed the king, impossible ! It is but too true ; continued the faithful squire. As we rode from the monastery, my master seemed buried in a most profound melancholy ; and, alighting in the forest, he threw himself on the grass, Fabian, said he, I cannot proceed ; at this moment I am distracted ; would to heaven I had never seen Aurelia ! I can never return the affection she honours me with, and I have made her miserable. The language of reproach

reproach could avail nothing at this moment, I therefore soothed my unfortunate master, and consoled him all I could. Several armed soldiers seemed in motion round us, and willing to divert the attention of Don Pedro from dwelling on his own misfortunes, I mentioned that they seemed gathering round the castle of Mendoza. He started on his feet at this information, and vaulting into his saddle, let us go, said he; let us hasten to preserve the mother of Leonora. He sighed as he mentioned the name, and we proceeded through the forest. We soon found that the treacherous Sancho meditated the surprise of the castle, and the vassals of the countess having no leader, made a very faint resistance, the presence of Don Pedro soon animated their spirits, you, my lord, witnessed the prodigies of his valour. We quitted the castle secretly, but not till our voices had hailed in common with the rest, Don Carlos, King of Leon. We turned our steps towards Leon to await the coming of
Donna

Donna Aurelia, but she came not ; my master received a billet, in which she informed him, that although Don Carlos dissembled before Leonora, that he was on the rack of torturing jealousy ; that she had demanded an interview, intending to inform him of her marriage, but that Don Carlos had refused to hear her, and threatened the life of her beloved Pedro.

“ Detested woman, interrupted Don Carlos, she sought me, 'tis true, and swearing me to eternal secrecy, confided her marriage with Don Pedro, but observed it was done in a moment of frenzy, after my unkind neglect, but added with a languishing look, I am severely punished, for he adores the divine Leonora ; keep then the secret of our marriage, I intreat you, fire, for I will not owe the love of Don Pedro to ought but his own free will. I have been long convinced of the baneful effects of this infernal plan. By this confidence she hoped to interest my pity, and give a
colour

colour to her own officiousness ; but proceed, good Fabian ; I will, replied the squire, but let us pursue our journey, we have no time to lose, I come to guide you, as well as to be the narrator of my master's mis fortunes."

Don Carlos was all impatience to learn some news of Leonora, for he guessed Fabian could inform him, but with his natural urbanity and complaisance, he forbore to stop the course of the old man's relation, and being mounted on horseback, he thus continued :

" Don Pedro was thunderstruck at this information, but having determined to be the champion of the countess de Mendoza, he resolved to put off all explanation with Aurelia, till after that event ; but the evening preceding she arrived in Leon, conducted by her uncle Don Alonzo. My master thought she would construe his absence into neglect, and went privately
to

to her apartment. She received him with coldness, and I saw her boasted love was all pretence; she scarcely appeared interested in his safety, and begged she might introduce him to Don Alonzo, as an indifferent person, for he was a weak man, and so much inclined to talk, that their marriage would soon be published. She left Don Pedro in her apartment, saying she must, to save appearances, wait on Leonora and her mother. She was not long gone; joy smiled on her countenance, she embraced Don Pedro, crying, be of good cheer, my love, we shall yet be happy, the adorable Leonora will interest herself in our behalf; I have seen her, have confided all my sorrows to her; she wept for the woes of Don Pedro, and will soften the obdurate king.

“ The whole demeanour of this abandoned woman was now changed, and her manners were tinged with levity, bordering upon wantonness. You know the
event

event of the morning, and my master was by my care conveyed to the house of Don Alonzo. The artful Aurelia had told her uncle a long tale of Don Pedro's attachment to Leonora; and the old lord pitied his desperate situation, but advised him to see her once more before she became the wife of another.

“ This was the ultimate bent of Aurelia's plan. Vasquez, a page, and two duennas of the palace, were in her interest, and pretending to my master, that the fortitude of Leonora, and her unalterable attachment to Don Carlos, would prove excellent antidotes to his still nourished hopeless passion; persuaded him, by every argument in her power, to see Leonora; even insinuated, she wished to thank the champion of her mother. She promised to procure him entrance, and my poor master, easily induced to what he wished, as soon as his wounds were dressed, followed a page she had provided, to the palace.

The

The moment this trusty spy saw him enter where Donna Leonora was sitting, he flew to find you, and you as readily imbibed the subtil poison ; but my master's good genius ordained, that he should escape the ungovernable transports of your rage, which the vile Aurelia hoped would have set her once more at liberty. Her chagrin at seeing him return was discernable to me, but she laboured to conceal it from her husband ; and he as awkwardly hid his increased passion for the virtuous Leonora, under the semblance of esteem for Aurelia. He proposed leaving Leon the next morning (as their connexion was still to be a secret) and he could not enjoy any of the proposed diversions. I attended him to his apartment ; we found there a suit of sumptuous armour, a shield, a helmet, all of which you doubtless too well remember, and one of the royal pages, who was kneeling, presented Don Pedro this billet. Carlos snatched it and read.

“ You

" You mean to quit us ; can I say nothing to induce you to alter so absurd a resolution ? Will you reject my intreaties and my presents ? The king does not engage. Gain the prize, and receive it from the hands of one who would be grateful, if you was not impatient."

Audacious wretch, exclaimed he, what punishment dost thou not merit ?

" She has already met with it, rejoined Fabian. After this note, and the evidence of the armour, joined to the delusions of his own imagination, can you, my good lord, wonder that Don Pedro resolved to combat before the queen ? But mark the discontent of mortal man ; as I helped to buckle on his armour, Fabian, said he, I am completely wretched, two women that I thought the most perfect beings under heaven, have deceived me. Aurelia, to answer some design I cannot fathom, has feigned a passion she never

felt. Last night her reception of me bordered on disgust. She rose at break of day, and I am confident was sometime in conference with Sancho ; nay, I will not affirm but that this roof sheltered both him and me. I feel the reflection forcibly in respect to honour, but my affections are not wounded by it. Ah, Leonora, there rankles the poisoned shaft.—Is she too fallen? By heaven, Fabian, I never knew disguise to thee, and I swear, that though to save or serve my Leonora, life is but a trifle to hold in the balance, yet at this instant, the wife of Don Carlos, of the friend which first taught me to know myself, I should revolt even if she presented herself, all blooming to my arms.”

Noble Pedro, exclaimed Carlos, let us hasten, I wish to embrace him, to bid him, in the strictest bonds of friendship with me and Leonora, forget the wrongs he has suffered for us. But, good Fabian, tell me,

me, are we drawing nearer Leonora? Is she safe?

“ Yes, yes, my lord, rejoined the old man, or Don Pedro would not have sent me. She, good lady, imagines herself confined by you, and declares she will not stir without you. But where did I leave my story? ah, just before the tournament.—Well, Don Pedro came back fatigued and dispirited, and Donna Aurelia persuaded him to retire to a small castle of hers at the foot of the mountains of Leon. Thither we went, and our Lady grew worse and worse, restless, discontented, reproaching and weeping was all her employment.

“ Don Pedro had too much reason to repent his precipitancy, and also, to think that Sancho was in his house much oftener than he could wish, determined, if he could find sufficient proof, that he would separate himself immediately from a woman who

too plainly told him, she had married to serve her vengeance. Don Pedro often made excursions abroad, and returned suddenly home, in hopes of surprising the tyrant, but they were on their guard. We now heard of the queen being carried off by a forged order, and from the unusual spirits of Aurelia, I allowed her a capital share in the plot. Knowing there were many strong places in the mountains, we traversed them night and day, and at length, one night, by moon-light, Don Pedro was fortunate enough to see the queen, and speak to her. The hazard of detection, obliged him to be quick, but he heard enough to know what a fiend he was united to, and what an angel was Leonora. He told her the castle did not belong to you, and assured her, that he would not himself quit the spot, for fear she should want some aid, but that he would dispatch me to Leon. We exerted our utmost speed to get home, in order to prepare for this undertaking; and I was to set forward by day-

day-break. Ere I could mount my horse, I was called to Don Pedro. I found him agitated and unhappy. He put aside a bed curtain, look there, Fabian, said he, behold all that remains of the once beautiful Aurelia. I started back with horror, and exclaimed, have you done this deed? No, he replied, the favour was designed for me. At my return, though late, she met me with unusual smiles; convinced of her perfidy, which I had long dreaded, dissimulation had been a crime. I boldly charged her with all my wrongs. She appeared thunderstruck, wept, raved, and intreated; nay, so far did she presume on my weakness, and former confidence in her, that she protested her innocence, and offered, if I would permit her, to clear all that should appear mysterious. This I could bear with no degree of patience. I swore I would not hear her, and that very hour would convey her to some convent, till the return of her father. At this she started up and demanded, if I really meant

to disbelieve all she said. Ah, Fabian, after an interview with such an angel, whose sufferings all arose from her, was it possible to keep measures with such a devil? Twice had my hand instinctively, as it were, half undrawn the sword presented by the injured Leonora, but reason checked my arm, and impelled me to save her for more public vengeance.

“ Finding herself without a subterfuge, she threw off the mask; thinkest thou, Don Pedro, that I mean to live far from the man I love, controuled by him I hate? No, I married thee to separate more widely the detested Leonora from my soul's idol. It was I that sent thee the billet and the armour; it was my gold that corrupted Vasquez, and threw my rival into Sancho's power; but the poor dastardly wretch improves not the golden moments chance and my schemes have given him; he dreads the majesty of her virtue, and the base bred, tame Leonora towers above the

the machinations of Aurelia. Yes, Don Pedro, I executed all this glorious mischief; and this auspicious eve, had fate seconded my designs, should have set me free, but thou hast counteracted all, and this meant for thee shall place me above thy power.

“Malice shone in every feature as she spoke, and ere I could prevent her, she swallowed the contents of that golden cup. The poison, aided by the fury which raged within, soon spread with subtle force through every vein; her agonies were not long, and she left the world with all her vices unrepented. See, continued he, revenge and malice on her distorted features. Relate to Don Carlos all these sad particulars, it will tend to convince him, that Don Pedro has been unfortunate, but never guilty.”

Fabian here ended his long relation, and received the thanks of Don Carlos;

they redoubled their speed, and soon reached the castle Fabian had indicated to be the prison of Leonora. Don Carlos ordered a knight to summons it, and the gates were immediately thrown open; eager to free his beloved, Don Carlos threw himself from his horse, and commanded Fabian to shew him the apartment where the queen of Leon was detained; the governor with all respect intreated his patience, and assured him, the ladies were no longer in the castle; disappointed and alarmed, Don Carlos leant upon his spear, and heard the escape of Leonora and Victoria, with no other emotions, but those of rage and incredulity; but the governor assured him, he had certain intelligence of the queen being in sanctuary at St. Adeline's, adding that, in consequence, he had dispatched messengers to seek his master. Don Carlos scarcely staid to thank him, but vaulting into his saddle, led the way to the monastery; the terrified nuns, at the sight of several

several armed men, threw wide their gates; Don Carlos, with all the respect they could wish, entered, followed only by Fabian, and requested to see the queen of Leon, the door opened, what rapture! he advanced, he stretched out his arms to enfold his Leonora, but she repelled him with one hand, and lifting up her veil with the other, discovered Victoria; she soon explained the mistake, and likewise assured him Leonora was not far off. The holy sisters were summoned, and interrogated respecting the fair novice; finding that evasion would not serve, they lighted their torches, and led the way through many deep arches, contrived by the hand of superstitious cruelty, they stopped and pointed to the door, which enclosed the fair Isabel; Don Carlos, with eager haste, unbolted the massy doors, and snatching a torch, flew down the rugged steps; but all was void, the traces of their flight was evident, and his hasty search was again checked by disappointment; he sent Vic-

toría under a strong escort to Leon, and continued his progress at random; chance directed him to the very spot, where the unfortunate Isabel and the faithful Lorenzo had breathed their last; the habit which Isabel still wore, alarmed him, nor was his emotions lessened, upon meeting a soldier, who knowing Fabian, gave Don Carlos the following lines, marked upon a tablet.

“ The queen of Leon is carried to the
fortress of St. Joseph, haste to her res-
cue, I will attempt entering its walls or
die. PEDRO.”

Don Carlos felt at this intelligence, all that could agitate the breast of man, his wife, his adored, his injured Leonora, precipitated by his jealous rage, into a danger, which nothing but the interposition of providence could frustrate; the fortress was deemed impregnable, the path by which he and his Leonora had
before

before escaped, was closed, and strongly guarded, despair environed him, and he uttered loud groans of anguish; Fabian alone, of all his knights, dared to approach him, he besought him to rise, but all his friendly admonitions were lost; at this juncture he was joined by the good father St. Pierre; Fabian related to him briefly all that had passed, the good man wept, he raised Don Carlos from the ground, and spoke to him thus: Canst thou, Don Carlos, as a man, and still more as the son of one possessed of every virtue, thus abandon thyself to all the stormy gusts of passion? trust me, it ill befits thee; but although there is much to blame throughout your conduct, this is not the moment for the hand of friendship to probe the wounds of sorrow; I have travelled thus far, to seek you, Don Carlos, to reproach your inaction; all Spain trembles, lest the tyrant should improve the moment, and bind them again in iron chains; his adherents begin to shew themselves abroad,

and your counsel can scarcely calm the people's clamorous fears, your army languishes for want of orders, and the tender Almeria mourns her Leonora; would she credit me, if I asserted that Don Carlos, adored by his soldiers, and certain that his queen was confined within the tyrant's last retreat, gave way to female sorrow, groans and unavailing sighs, rather than lead his brave avengers on? With such a chief, what might they not perform, what glorious deeds! Yes, the proud towers would nod, the massy gates would bend, and a joyful people hail their queen restored; he paused, and Don Carlos, ashamed of his tumultuous sorrow, pressed the old man's hand to his breast, and ordered some of his faithful knights to repair, and hasten the army; tell their general Don Alvarez, cried he, that the life and honour of my queen are both at stake; tell him, to my brave soldiers I commit it both; I will myself wield the spear
among

among them, and follow Sancho even to the very center of the globe.

It is well this ardour, returned St. Pierre ; it is as the son of Alphonso ought to speak, it is as I have, in the field of battle, seen thy brave father, his very soul rising in his eyes, the lambent flame of glory dwelling on his words, and running with resistless force, from rank to rank, the infidels trembled at his name, thousands of captives graced the victor's chariot, and Spain was blest through him.

The eyes of Carlos sparkled at the praises of his father ; grant eternal heaven, cried he, that this arm may avenge my murdered parents, grant me to reach the traitor's heart, and I will die content if it is thy will ! St. Pierre embraced him in transport, may thy wishes, when they arise from honour, ever be crowned with success, noble Carlos ; let us hasten to meet your brave soldiers, I will elevate the

the cross before them, I will awake their native ardour, and fight again in retrospective view, the battles of my youth. Thou too, rejoined Don Carlos, was once a soldier also; as we pass, to cheat the tedious hours, tell me, good father, why beneath the monkish cowl is hid a warrior's soul. "You bid me, said the old man, retrace the scenes of former days, which thirty years of solitude and prayer, have not yet obliterated; but you may learn even in my humble tale, a moral lesson, man's impetuous passions are seldom checked, till sorrow and disappointment have taught him moderation; Don Philip de Cortez was my father, he had three sons, I was the youngest of them, and I believe much beloved by my father; my two brothers possessed dispositions at once haughty and inflexible; my father had often occasion to reproach them, but his admonitions were disregarded, and every day produced some new enormity; waraged against the infidels, and Alphonso
and

and myself flashed together our maiden swords, he appointed me one of his knights, a distinction, as flattering to myself and father, as it was productive of envy to my brothers; they thwarted me on every occasion, and I saw with pain, that they became daily more unpleasing to my father, yet conscious of my own integrity, and good disposition towards them, I fulfilled cheerfully the duties of my profession, and avoided altercation with them, as much as possible. One evening, as I was returning home to see my father, after a longer absence than usual, I heard a woman shrieking dreadfully, in a thicket hard by, I ran thither, and saw a beautiful creature struggling to free herself from the rude grasp of two men masked; I was young, and a Spaniard you may naturally conclude my lord, that I was not tardy in rescuing her; one fell beneath my blows, the other fled, and the sweet Isidora returned me thanks, with a native grace which charmed me indeed, though our intercourse

intercourse was momentary, I was gone an age in love, the attachment was mutual, I intreated permission to convey my lovely prize to her abode, she consented with a smile; but great God, how shall I paint my feelings, when I learnt that my elder brother, Don Lopez, was her persecutor; I stopped, have I then shed a brother's blood—heaven forbid, exclaimed the affrighted Isidora, it would embitter all my peace, if my deliverer was stained with such a crime; agitated and tormented by a thousand fears, I at length conducted my fair charge to her humble dwelling, I raised her hand to my lips, and promised to see her again, when I had ascertained the extent of my misfortune, the tear trembled in her beauteous eyes, my father will thank you, said she, noble knight, for I cannot.

“I galloped with speed back to the wood, I tore the mask from the face of the corpse, what transport, it was not my brother, but
some

some base mercenary wretch, whom gold had tempted, to betray the virtuous Isidora, a weight of misery seemed flung from off my bosom, and before I approached my home, fancy had painted every thing just as I wished, and I had acquitted Don Lopez in my own mind, from having any share in the late transaction; but the moment I saw him, rage and guilt betrayed themselves on his haggard countenance, and as I saluted my father, this unworthy brother exclaimed, it well becomes an unnatural being, like Octavia, to meet his indulgent parent with a smile, when but now his arm was raised to deprive him of a son; I gazed at him in speechless wonder, and could scarce credit the evidence of my senses, when I heard him relate to my father, the very transaction that had so recently taken place, only putting himself in my stead, as the rescuer of Isidora, and painting me in the odious colours of her betrayer, and ravisher. My father had too great a confidence

confidence in my honour, to put implicit trust in Lopez; but Ricardo, our other brother, confirmed his testimony, and ordered the breathless body to be dragged thither, as a proof against me. Don Philip was thunderstruck, he turned to me; Octavia, could I have believed my darling son would ere have acted thus. It was in vain to protect my innocence, to prove it I must calumniate my brothers, and their example was too black for me to follow; I therefore contented myself, with telling my father, that he would probably soon be able to discern the innocent from the guilty; but I had one favour to request humbly, even on my bended knee, which was, that retribution should not be too severe, but mercy, temper, justice; even Don Lopez could not bear this galling stroke, he walked to an open window; my father stood suspended, but I advanced towards him, and extending my arms, articulated almost with tears, will not my father afford me

an

an embrace; the venerable old man rushed into my arms and sobbed upon my bosom, the two brethren, I will not call them mine, hastened out of the room, Don Philip watched their departure, and again embracing me, said, leave my ever loved Octavia, leave for a season this abode of danger, I dare believe thy brothers will respect their father; they will not dare to touch my life, but who shall dare secure me thine; fly, my worthy son, the confusion of Don Lopez, at thy generous forbearance, has unfolded all before me, fly, and, if thou canst, place the fair injured innocent beyond the reach of harm.

“Forth I went, a melancholy wanderer; in spite of all my fortitude, the tears gushed forth, as I rode from my paternal dwelling; the night was very dark, yet I recollected the very cottage, where I had left the beautiful Isidora; I remembered my father’s last words, and I ascribed

cribed my present speed to his benevolence; ere I had remeasured half the way, a troop of armed men rushed forth upon me, and assailed me on all sides; determined to sell my life as dearly as possible, I collected all my firmness, and sustained the first onset, with as much vigour, that they gave back in disorder, their leader rallied them, and I knew the voice of Ricardo; I immediately called aloud, and demanded of my brother, why he came thus armed against me; he answered not, but spurring his horse past me, aimed a violent blow, which I received on my trusty shield; he turned and attacked me, I strove alone to parry his blows, but never returned him one; enraged to be thus baffled, he exclaimed, curse on thy coward virtues, I despise both thee and them, live to dread our vengeance; then mingling with his ruffian band, he disappeared with a whirlwind speed; I continued my way, but night had ran half her course, ere I reached
the

the humble abode of Ifidora; I was fearful of disturbing her, and meditated passing the rest of the night, in some out-house, but I beheld a light through the casement, and ventured to knock softly, no one answered, I opened the door with care; but what a scene presented itself, on one side of the cottage was a neat bed, upon which lay the pale, lifeless corpse of an old man, by his side sat the lovely Ifidora, one of his cold hands grasped between hers; disorder manifested in her whole appearance, her head dropped on the back of a chair, and probably, overpowered by grief and fatigue, had sunk into a profound sleep; I sat by her, she seemed uneasy, her rest was perturbed, and in about half an hour, she opened her eyes, and fixed them wildly upon me; I assured her in the mildest accents, that I was come to do her service; she gazed again, her recollection returned, and she caught my hand, she pressed it to her lips, you are good indeed, cried she; but
alas,

alas, to what misery am I reserved; she looked at the corpse, added my father, and burst anew into tears. I comforted the sweet mourner; alas, rejoined she, giving me an expressive look, what dangers does my weak sex incur; your fears, your emotions, my lord, told me too plainly, that my persecutor was your brother, the sight of you gives me the greatest pleasure I am at this moment capable of tasting, for I firmly believe your rectitude would have hindered your ever seeking this cottage, had he fallen by your hand; I have been long subject to the persecutions of Don Lopez, he has assailed my father, and myself, without ceasing, we knew him, and we knew his power, and determined, in order to avoid them, to quit our present abode, and fix elsewhere; this fatal man, the detested Lopez, aware of our design, bore me away even from my father's arms; that virtuous, that affectionate parent, borne down by age, could not resist this new affliction,

affliction, he sunk under its pressure, and when released by your benevolent interference, I flew to ease his fond alarms, I beheld him reclined on this chair, pale, gasping, and expiring, I knelt, I pressed his hands, he knew me, he blessed and embraced me; ah, my child, he faltered, this sight has smothered the path of death, lead me to my bed, and let my last sigh be received by thee; nature seemed exhausted by this effort, and he breathed his last in my arms.

“ By this time, a wound I had received in my arm, began to grow very painful; I moved it with evident difficulty. My God! exclaimed Isidora, you are wounded, the blood drops from your arm, pray come with me; she presented her hand, and led me into a small but neat chamber; every thing indicated that this belonged to Isidora. She intreated me to pull off my armour, and go to bed, whilst she hastened to call up an old shepherd, whose eyes bore

bore testimony that he revered his departed master. Antonio, said the fascinating girl, I beg you will exert all your skill in dressing the wounds of this stranger. He saved me, Antonio ; yes, it is to him I owe my existence. Antonio pressed my hand to his lips ; the action, and the looks he gave to me and Isidora alternately, were far beyond the eloquence of speech. I was confined three days, during which time I was carefully attended by Isidora and Antonio.

“ As my strength gradually increased, our conversations became more frequent. Her father had been once of some consequence, but unjustly deprived of his inheritance by more powerful kinsmen ; and with this only child, the loved image of the wife of his youth, he retired to this cottage, and of all the vassals his former prosperity had fed, old Antonio alone had the gratitude to partake his master’s reverse of fortune ; they lived as friends, mutual obligations had

had endeared them to each other, and Antonio paid the tribute of unfeigned grief to the memory of his benefactor. Antonio was gone one morning to purchase provisions, as he usually did, and Isidora and myself were left alone, when the thought of her future safety, which had often engrossed my mind, recurred with additional force, as she related some instances of my brother's ferocity, which were unknown to me, and I communicated my fears to her, and begged her to adopt any scheme she should think feasible, and that I would hazard my life to oblige her; the amiable girl blushed, that, my lord, you have already done, heaven be praised, your benevolence has not been attended with the effects I dreaded; if I cannot remain with safety here, I could wish to retire to some monastery, the veil is an asylum my persecutor will not dare to violate, and though it was a life I never felt inclined to embrace, the present necessity and time will doubtless

conquer every repugnant idea; as she ceased, tears dropped from her brilliant eyes, I threw myself at her feet, I intreated her to banish those clouds of sorrow, and if she really felt the gratitude she described, never to mention again the veil; I painted to her, with all the enthusiasm of a young and ardent mind, the picture of a nun, without a vocation; she trembled as I spoke, I offered her the protection of my friends, I proposed to conduct her to Mendoza. Ramirez de Mendoza was the friend of my heart, and I knew the virtues of Felicia, his amiable sister, and likewise his own, sufficient to deposit in their care, my peerless treasure, we consulted Antonio, and he approved the measure; Isidora at my request, put the old man in possession of her father's property, and established him master of the cottage; she tenderly embraced him at parting, and he laid a strict injunction on me, to behave with honour to the distressed,

treffed, and orphan Ifidora, as I hoped for eternal mercy.

“ Ah to one, that adored like me, all precautions of that nature were needless; my assurances calmed the old man's fears, and we departed with his blessing; Ifidora was extremely melancholy, and the habitation where we rested for the night, was not calculated to remove her terrors, it was occupied by a man and woman, whose savage looks and behaviour, augured no good; I knew the delicate frame of Ifidora could not endure the fatigue of our intended journey, without some rest, and I begged her to retire, promising that I would not quit my armour, but remain ready to defend her if necessary; I could with difficulty persuade her to leave me, and placing my lamp in the chimney, I sat down to wait for an attack, for I was now sufficiently convinced in my own mind, from the situation, that this was the rendezvous of a ban-

ditti; but not knowing where else to rest in that neighbourhood, I resolved to defend the door, if they should attempt entering, to the last gasp. About two hours after, our host knocked at the door, and intreated I would permit a benighted traveller to repose in my room; I asked if he was alone (at this question I heard a whispering, and gathered that the remainder of the crew, would be there by day break) upon receiving an answer, that the cavalier was alone, and unarmed, I opened the door, and receiving a tall elegant formed man, whose manners denounced him the gentleman, far beyond his appearance, many compliments passed between us, and his supper was brought in; whilst he was eating it, our hostess called him forth, he returned in a few moments; stranger, said he, you have a young lady with you, are you apprehensive of any danger; none, replied I, firmly, but from the banditti of the forest; he smiled, I am the captain of that banditti,

ditti, replied he ; but we do not oppress those that are persecuted and unprotected ; after this candid confession, you need be under no apprehensions from me ; but I am this moment told, that a number of armed men are gathered about the house, and that the objects of their pursuit, are Don Octavia de Cortez, and a young maid, he has forcibly carried from her dwelling ; I am indeed Don Octavia, replied I, but we are objects of persecution ; I then without hesitation, related to him every occurrence, he took me by the hand, for this time, said he, you shall be secure, I expect a party of my friends every moment, till they arrive, we will keep them employed.

“ He then ordered the doors of the house to be barricadoed, and the host, who was a stout fellow, armed himself with a carbine to assist us. Poor Isidora, who heard all that had passed, rushed out of the chamber, and throwing herself at my feet, con-

jured me to abandon her to the cruelest fate, rather than expose myself to such dangers. The captain of the banditti joined me in calming her fears, but we could not effectually prevail. Our adversaries soon burst the doors, and assailed us with all their force. I found my companion brave, fearless of danger, yet collected and cool. There were but few that dared encounter our blows, for three fell instantly breathless at our feet. We soon heard loud shouts from without, to which my brave friend replied; and our adversaries were soon dispersed, except one who kept the captain of the banditti closely engaged, and seemed resolved to sell his life dearly. A violent blow, which wounded him severely, unclasped his vizir, and discovered to me the features of my brother Don Lopez. I uttered a loud cry, and immediately threw myself betwixt the combatants; he knew me, and his rage redoubled, but his strength was not equal to his will, and he sunk upon the ground,
faint

faint with loss of blood. The banditti following their usual custom, would have dispatched him; but I shielded him with my own body, I vowed they should reach his heart through mine. The captain of the banditti commanded them to desist, and helping me to raise Don Lopez, said, though I risk my own life (for I have no reliance on the generosity of your brother) yet I am so charmed with yours, that he shall live. Let him remain with his followers under this roof, till his wounds shall be cured. May a sense of his own injustice teach him the superiority a good action gives even a robber over a man who calls himself honest, and acts unworthy the appellation. You, Don Octavia, and your fair charge, shall be our farther care.

“ I went to my Isidora; I found her on her knees offering up her prayers for my safety. On seeing me she was transported with joy, and we agreed to rely upon our protector. The troop received

us with the utmost deference, and horses being allotted us, we struck into a deep forest, and was soon out of sight of the house which had occasioned us so much uneasiness. When we had travelled a great while through those gloomy recesses, they made a sudden halt, and the captain riding up to me, said, Don Octavia, we have agreed amongst ourselves to receive you and the fair Isidora into our habitation, till the rage of pursuit shall be over, for doubtless this affair will occasion much noise, but as those not of our fraternity, whom hazard or captivity have directed to our abode, have never been suffered to return for fear of discovery, we must intreat you to take a solemn oath, never to dissolve it to any one, and ye must both submit to be blindfolded from this spot. I cheerfully agreed to the proposed terms, but Isidora trembled; her delicate apprehensions were all alive, nor were they in the least subdued when they unbound her eyes, upon finding herself in a cave of
transparent

transparent gems. She uttered an exclamation which alarmed me, and I tore off the bandage to receive as great a surprise. The captain smiled at our astonishment. To us, said he, this surprising work of nature is become familiar. What you behold, and indeed the greatest part of our habitation, consists of a salt mine, which has not been worked for ages, and the light of our torches, cause these various reflections. They had several women voluntary captives in this subterraneous abode, and they served up a most exquisite repast. The chiefs of the robbers and ourselves sat apart from the rest, and the most perfect regularity and good humour subsisted. Ifidora was allotted a convenient cave next to one designed for me; and overpowered with her recent sufferings, she soon retired. Mirth and conviviality unrestrained by her presence, soon prevailed; nor did we separate very soon.

“We lived in this manner a fortnight, at the end of that time I perceived our good friend the captain grew very uneasy and thoughtful, and one evening, calling me aside, Don Octavia, said he, there is no longer any mention made of our affair, and as the stronger proof of my friendly intentions to you, I will no longer conceal the danger you incur by remaining here, although Donna Isidora has kept herself constantly secluded since the first evening of her entrance, some of my brethren have found the influence of her charms; they murmur at the respect I pay you, and used to indulge their inclinations unrestrained, and unbounded, I fear they will take some moment that I may be unavoidably absent, to seize on the lady, and perhaps murder you. To avoid this danger, I will lead yourself and the fair Isidora far from this cavern, by a road known only to myself. I thanked him, as his noble actions deserved, and would fain have persuaded him to follow our fortunes, promising

promising to interest myself with the Prince Alphonso in his behalf, but he declined the offer, saying, at some future time he might claim my friendship, but at present it was impossible. We fetched Isidora; she was rejoiced at the thoughts of once more beholding day-light, and leaning on my arm, we followed our benevolent friend. He led us through several arches, and at length coming to a brook, the water of which was fordable, you must cross this water, said he, Octavia, and pursue that road, it will lead to Oviedo, and from thence you will easily get to the castle of Mendoza. We embraced each other, and he, respectfully kissing the hand of Isidora, returned back by the same road.

“ I carried my lovely charge across the brook, and we agreed to halt at a grove not far distant, till daylight. Isidora seated herself on the grass, and I threw myself by her. I made a full avowal of my love;

K. 6

I in-

I intreated her the first favourable opportunity to be mine, and related the last words my father had said to me. Ah, how delicious were those moments when the fair Ifidora acknowledged, with sweet confusion, a reciprocity of affection; but she begged me not to think of marriage till sanctioned by my father. Too much taken up with each other to heed time, we were very late in reaching Oviedo, but I was fortunate enough to obtain good accommodation for my dear Ifidora. At day-break we were alarmed by a loud noise, and several soldiers rushed into my apartment, and seizing me in the king's name, ordered me to make no resistance, I submitted, but intreated permission to take my leave of Ifidora. She had already learnt my misfortune, and she was instantly in my arms. She wept bitterly; I told her to go immediately to Mendoza. Alas, interrupted she, why should I leave you? May I not soothe your hours of imprisonment—

prisonment? May I not alleviate your sufferings, and ease the pain of bonds?

"The soldiers assured her she would not be permitted to enter the gates of the prison, and desired me to dispatch. Callous, unfeeling wretches, they knew not the pangs of separation from all that rendered life desirable. By chance at this juncture my friend Ramirez passed thro' Oviedo, in his way to his own castle. Curiosity led him to enquire the meaning of these soldiers he beheld before the inn; and the first he accosted told him their business, and the name of their prisoner. He demanded to see me. They knew his rank, and did not care to refuse. What a meeting was this! yet it conveyed a portion of comfort to my wretchedness, to leave Isidora in the hands of one who had courage and abilities to protect her. Our adieus were the most tender possible. I left all I held most dear senseless in the arms of the brave Mendoza, and was conveyed

veyed to one of the state prisons. I found my crime was, that I had joined the banditti, which had long infested Spain, in order to gratify my own revenge, and that I was held in prison to answer for an attack on the life of my elder brother, as well as the violation of my country's peace, by joining with enemies more dreadful to her than all the armies of the infidels. Alphonso was just crowned, but I could not gain access to his royal ear. My prison walls could not be penetrated by the deep groans of anguish, or the tears of innocence. Whilst I was giving myself up to despair in all the horrors of a dungeon, my friend Ramirez was suddenly called away against the infidels, and Isidora remained at the castle with his sister, but she could not enjoy the pleasures nor the protection offered her, whilst she remembered that I was groaning out my life in a miserable prison. She disguised herself, and notwithstanding all the persuasions of the timid Felicia, she sat off to execute one of the

the

the boldest projects ever love inspired. Dressed as a novice of the dominican order, she easily obtained access to Don Philip de Cortez. He was sitting in a saloon with my two brothers; and although three months had elapsed, Don Lopez was not yet recovered from the wounds he had received. After the usual compliments, Isidora told my father she was come a petitioner from an unfortunate son; Don Philip's natural tenderness was instantly awakened, but he hid it under a semblance of severity. Isidora, with all her natural graces of elocution, painted my situation, and boldly asserted my innocence. My beloved father heaved a sigh, and exclaimed, unfortunate Octavia, would to heaven I could prove thy innocence! Ay, interrupted Don Lopez hastily, let us dismiss this meddling novice; unless indeed, added he with an arrogant smile, he can prove the innocence of Don Octavia, I cannot call him brother.

"No,

"No, rejoined Ifidora, thou dost well, Don Lopez, for his guiltless nature revolts at such a brother; dost thou imagine I came without a proof of the innocence I so boldly assert? No, Don Lopez, both you and Don Ricardo shall behold a proof that will confound your guilt, and justify your brother. Behold, continued she, addressing herself to Don Philip, and throwing off her habit, behold Ifidora, and ye sons of the brave Cortez, behold the object of your persecution, behold her whom your gallant brother saved from your base designs. Alone and unprotected, confiding in your father's honour, I am come to clear his loved Octavia, and restore him to life, to liberty, and a father's love.

Lopez and Ricardo, though confounded in the highest degree, yet attempted to invalidate her testimony, but my father, happy to be able, consistent with justice, to follow his own inclination in favour of

me,

me, commanded them to be silent, and drove them from his presence in displeasure; he treated the beautiful Isidora as his daughter, and they scarce allowed themselves any rest, till they reached the camp, where the king then was; Isidora led by Don Philip, fell at the feet of Alphonso, she told her artless tale, and he graciously listened to her petition; he raised her up, and bade her be comforted, and rely that from the affection he himself bore Don Octavia, he would willingly serve him, consistent with the duty he owed his people, but, added he, was Octavia my brother, and had he offended against the laws of his country, I would deliver him up to them; I am convinced now, that his brothers have foully wronged him, but nothing can extenuate the charge of his having joined the banditti, and remained with them a considerable time; who will believe, though I myself should set the example of confidence; yet who, I say, will believe, that Don Octavia, under

under such obligations to these men, should refrain from giving them sometimes his assistance, during their attacks; in short, my lovely Isidora, there is but one condition, on which I can grant Don Octavia a full pardon, which is, that he shall on receiving it, lead a band of chosen soldiers, the way by which ye escaped, to seize those ruffians, which have so long infested the roads of Spain; go to him, Don Philip, take with you the beauteous Isidora, and let me know the result of your conference; my father and his fair companion hastened to my prison, they gained access, and Isidora, unmindful of my chains, rushed into my arms; live Don Octavia, said she, live for happiness and Isidora; my father followed her, he bathed my cheeks with his tears, he repeatedly asked me to pardon his unkind neglect; but for this angel, you, my dear Octavia, would have long languished in misery and oblivion; he then recounted to me, all that had passed,

passed, and concluded with the conditions, on which Alphonso had promised me a pardon; all my visionary dreams of love and happiness, banished in an instant; tell the king, said I, he has not a subject, who respects him more than I do, I have every sense of his proffered favour, but on these conditions, can never accept it, if life and fame are to be purchased by such heinous ingratitude; I must bear my fate with resignation, and embrace my galling chains; my father did not urge me, Isidora wept and bade me not despair, the door closed upon them, and life itself seemed vanished. I remained some moments in a stupid lethargy, and almost persuaded myself, that all I had beheld was a dream.

“ My father and Isidora returned, and related to the king all that had passed; my father dwelt in forcible terms on my refusal; I knew Octavia's honour too well, replied Alphonso, to doubt his answer,

swer, I admire his noble constancy in virtue, and yet painful as is the task, I must pronounce his sentence according to our laws, and banish the noble Octavia; as he spoke, Isidora fell at his feet in a transport of joy; ten thousand blessings, gracious Alphonso, for this testimony of Octavia's innocence, what is the punishment of exile, or even death, when the good opinion of such a prince is the purchase; hasten Don Philip, let us carry him the consolatory tidings. I was ruminating in my dungeon, when the doors unlocked with more than usual celerity, and Isidora, breathless with haste, flew in, thou art free, cried she in extacy, these walls shall no more listen to thy groans, the wanton echoes shall no more sport with thy complaints, thou art free, and Isidora happy.

“My father suffered her to give way to her transports, ere he unfolded all his purpose, the suffrage of my king, caused my

my bosom to glow with transport and gratitude; but when he mentioned banishment, I gave an involuntary start, a cold chill, like that of death, invaded my heart, and I dropped motionless into my father's arms; Isidora knelt by my side, she raised my languid head on her bosom, she called me by every endearing name, and as my wandering reason returned, I articulated the word "banished;" the first object I beheld, was Isidora, I started up; banished from thee, Isidora, the thought is agony. She laid her hand gently upon my arm, Don Octavia, said she, sanctioned by your father, to keep you in a moment's suspense of this juncture, would be a cruel exertion of prudery, which I despise; interest had never no share in my attachment, and I here solemnly swear, that if you are banished, I am henceforth a stranger also in Spain; you once avowed to live but for Isidora, and she now claims that promise; yes, Don Octavia, I am wholly thine; I caught

caught her to my bosom in a frenzy of joy, how lovely did she look ; at that moment Don Philip embraced us both affectionately, and conducted us to a castle, belonging to a friend, where we found Felicia de Mendoza ready to receive and congratulate us ; she was at that time very young, but possessed of an uncommon understanding, her mind expanded its powers, at a very early period, and gave her the solidity of riper years. Alphonso had requested to see me, before I quitted Spain, and my father took me disguised, to the royal tent ; I would have knelt, but the beneficent monarch prevented me, he lamented the cruel necessity he was under, of banishing a friend and companion in arms, whom he so sincerely esteemed ; but advised me to take up my residence on the frontiers of Portugal, promising me secret recommendations to that court ; I thanked him with the gratitude his friendship merited, and acquainted him with my intended union
with

with Ifidora ; it gave him pleasure to find that I was certain of such a companion to soften the sorrows of exile, he told me my brothers were in the camp, and distinguished themselves much against the enemy ; and now, Octavia, said this engaging monarch, after all you have suffered, are you still willing to defer your marriage a little time, till you shall ascertain the happiness of your friend ; I bowed, and requested him to command my services to their full extent ; thus then, said he, I have been long solicited to marry, and Isabella, Princess of Portugal, has been strongly recommended to me ; but princes or princesses never want for flatterers, I dare not trust to their description ; Isabella may have the same doubts as myself, and I am determined to owe all to love, and nothing to my crown ; under pretence of a journey to a distant part of my dominions, I have appointed Sancho of Arragon (the same who afterwards conspired against Alphonso)

and

and Ramirez de Mendoza, joint in authority, till my return, and accompanied by you, will visit the court of Portugal ; I did not hesitate to comply, but charging my father to protect my Ifidora, and carry my adieus to her, we mounted our horses, and took our road towards the sea shore, a vessel was ready to sail, and we went on board, and after a prosperous voyage, cast anchor in the Tagus ; the impatience of Alphonso, to behold Donna Isabella, was so great, that he made himself liable to some suspicion by his eagerness, and he agreed to leave the matter to me ; a fortnight elapsed, without any opportunity occurring ; but at length we saw her by the side of the great altar, on a high festival ; her form I saw pleased the king, but yet he was not satisfied ; I would know, said he, whether she has a correspondent mind, and to prove it, he got himself introduced at court, as a young Spanish grandee of the first class, he was received with polite respect, and had soon opportunity to convince

vince himself, that fame had not exaggerated any reports, in favour of the princess; she was mild, sensible, penetrating, and of an amiable temper; she did not seem to behold the young Spanish stranger with indifference, and at length he hazarded a declaration; the princess blushed; whatever may be my sentiments, noble stranger, replied she, they will ever be buried in my own bosom; my parents have brought me up with every indulgence, and they merit in return implicit obedience; they tell me I am destined to be the wife of the Spanish king; fame speaks highly of his virtues, and they make the task of duty less repugnant. Alphonso in vain tried to draw a farther confession in his favour, but the prudent princess always turned the discourse, and even affected to resent his conduct.

“ One evening, as I was passing an antichamber of the palace, I heard a voice calling me by my name, and looking

VOL. II.

L

round,

round, perceived one of the princess's women; my mistress, said she, requests to see you for a few moments; I bowed and followed her to the apartment, I found the fair Isabella in great perturbation, she was walking to and fro in the room, in the most violent emotion; Don Octavia, said she, the reason I sent for you, will plead so powerfully in my favour, that I shall not scruple to wave all ceremony, and ask you the name of your friend; I started at this prelude, but answered with tolerable composure; he was presented to you, madam, by the name of Don Hernando del Campo; I know it, said she, and that occasions the disorder you behold; a stranger but this morning arrived, has been introduced this moment to my father by that name, he is known to many of our nobles, and my father is consequently excessively enraged, that any one should presume to impose upon him, and threatens your friend with severe punishment; the part I act, will perhaps induce

induce him to indulge a hope, now more fallacious than ever; take this gold, these jewels, escape both of ye, and shun the courts of Spain and Portugal, for tell him, he will find the queen of Spain far more severe than the princess of Portugal.

“ I gazed for some moments at your excellent mother, I saw her bosom heave with tumultuous passions, I saw the share the false Hernando bore in the conflict; but I was as equally convinced, that virtue was far predominant over love, and nothing was to be hoped, that duty did not sanction; she gracefully bowed to me, she waved her hand for me to retire, and I obeyed, impressed with the highest sense of her worth; I found your father totally unconcerned, and unknowing all that had passed, walking on the banks of the Tagus, contemplating in idea, the beauties of Isabella; I related all that had passed, and in evidence, produced the

casket of gold and jewels, sent by Isabella, he opened it, and forcing all the contents into my hands, pressed the casket to his bosom, dear inestimable pledge of love, said he, never while life shall play around Alphonso's heart, shall thou be lost to his remembrance; quick Octavia, lead me to my princess, let me hush her stormy fears to rest, and bid her live and bless Alphonso. We were not long returning, I opened the door, the princess was in tears; she started on seeing me, resentment seemed kindling in her gentle bosom, but on perceiving the false Hernando following me, she seemed irresolute, and all her endeavours were exerted to obtain composure; I thought sir, said she indignantly, our intercourse was ended; he who cannot appear before the king of Portugal, cannot expect the private countenance of his daughter; true, adorable Isabella, replied your father with a smile, but I come to crave your pardon for the deceit, and to intreat you
will

will yourself present your happy favoured lover, to the king of Portugal, I renounce all claim to Don Hernando's title, I am Alphonso your destined husband, will you not acknowledge me? The fair Isabella blushed of the deepest crimson, she hesitated, she cast a supplicating look on me, I understood it, and confirmed the truth of all my master had asserted; in fine, your father was introduced in his real character, and in a very short time returned to Spain, to prepare for the reception of his queen, promising to receive her from me on the frontiers, and conduct my Isidora to my arms in return; I accompanied your mother to the appointed place, we found the king already there, but my eager eyes could discern no Isidora, amongst the shining train of Spanish beauties, who were eager to pay their homage to their new queen; Alphonso, pitying my rack of suspense, scarcely staid to embrace his Isabella, ere he took me apart, and in the gentlest

L 3

manner.

manner broke to me the dreadful intelligence, at his return, he went to Isidora, and bade her prepare to accompany him to Portugal, he made her magnificent presents for the occasion, as did my father, whose infirmities prevented him from taking so long a journey; the intermediate space of time she was to spend with my friend Mendoza, and his newly espoused countess, her apartment opened to the garden, and she slept it seems with the windows open, on account of the excessive heat, and as they imagined the great height of the wall, must preclude every danger. The morning they had appointed to join the king, Almeria, according to her usual custom, went to see Isidora, on opening the door, she was amazed to see no one, she called to her women, which lay in an adjoining apartment, they were also gone; terrified beyond measure, she flew to Ramirez, search was made, but in vain, for in the course of it, they found a breach had been made in
the

the garden wall, through which the lovely prize was undoubtedly conveyed, and he added, that he was sorry to say, Don Lopez had been missing some days; I give you, continued that gracious monarch, this signet, and with it full permission to remain as long in Spain, as may be necessary to redeem the lovely fugitive, command the assistance of all my subjects, and let it be some consolation, dear Octavia, that no time has been lost; Ramirez de Mendoza and your father, are indefatigable in the search; adieu my friend, may the laurel be reserved for you. I hardly know what I said, but I mounted a horse, and pursued my way; I traced all the usual haunts of Ricardo and Lopez; but in vain; their people assured me, that Ricardo had embarked in a crusade, and that Lopez had not been heard of for some time; I joined my father and Don Ramirez, and after a fruitless search of three months, I fell ill at a little village,

called St. Nicholas, on the sea shore, they watched me with unremitting attention, and my fever, though violent, did not last long; but that, and grief together, had undermined my strength, and my only relief was crawling to the sea shore, to exhale the invigorating breeze; a tempestuous night had deprived me of the little rest I in general enjoyed, and Ramirez entered my chamber at day break; if you are inclined for walking, said he, let us go down to the beach, for I am certain there has been a wreck this night, by the cries I just now heard; I was instantly ready, and we sallied forth, I never beheld a finer morning, the temperate sky seemed, by its smiling rays, to hush the stormy billows into a calm, they growled at a distance, as if they dared not disturb the approach of Aurora, or as if they lamented the mischiefs of the night; a wreck as my friend imagined was in sight; upon a part of the deck, I plainly discovered some human beings; let us
hasten

hasten Ramirez, said I, the waves retire; we can wade to the ship, and probably we can save those miserable beings; ever alive to humanity, my friend outran my purpose, and arrived first at the wreck, a few seconds more had been too late, for as he approached, a female, pale, wan, and emaciated, threw herself into his arms; and at the same moment, the vessel gave another bulge, and the whole disappeared; the shock and agitation of the waves, made it nearly as much as Ramirez, with all his uncommon strength, could do, to reach the land in safety; but when we came to examine more nearly the features of this lady, we knew her to be our long sought Isidora; I clasped her frantically in my arms, and my transport brought back her ebbing reason, she knew me, and reclined her pale cheek upon my bosom, we conveyed her to an apartment, where she was put to bed; I would not leave her a moment; in a few hours she revived, my father sat on one

sister of her, and I knelt on the other, Ramirez stood by me, gazing at her in silence, she looked at us all, and putting her hand in mine, faintly smiled, and said, surrounded by all I hold most dear in this world, can I die more happy; observing my emotion, she raised my hand to her lips, it cannot be my beloved Octavia, said she; had providence so ordered it as your wife, however humble our destiny, I should have been content; but heaven saw otherwise, it has given me however, the sad consolation of dying in your arms, and of telling you, that I am still yours in thought and truth. Don Lopez, unfortunate man, perished in this fatal storm, in the very action of tearing me from my native country; we have traversed all Spain, to avoid pursuit, since the fatal night that I was first carried off, and finding that no place could afford sufficient shelter, for his black designs, he hired that vessel, purposing to join his brother in the holy land, my destiny, if
once

once safe upon another shore, might have been anticipated, fatigue and sorrow had worn me to what you see; when last night, a dreadful storm arose, Don Lopez several times declared, he had rather perish, than land again on the coast of Spain; too fatally he had his wish, a violent surge overwhelmed him ere dawn of day, and looking upon my own fate as inevitable, when the storm subsided, I left my place of safety, and ascended the deck, these vile women which betrayed me, now clung around me for support and shelter; I told them calmly we had nothing to hope, they raved, and rent the air with shrieks; - but in this moment of despair, I discerned two men wading towards us, one I thought like you, as he approached, I knew Don Ramirez to be the other; ah, my beloved, my ever dear Octavia, moderate your excessive grief, console your venerable father, he has just lost one son, and will you not preserve him another for my sake, I request you will prove your

love in this instance; I was too much affected to reply, she half raised herself to embrace me, I folded my arms around her, she pressed my cheek with her cold lips, she turned her head to my father, threw one arm round his neck, reclined upon my shoulder, and with a sigh resigned her spotless soul; I was dragged insensible from the breathless body, and Ramirez, hoping to divert the torrent of my grief, conveyed me to a room, where the mangled disfigured corpse of my unfortunate brother, which had been cast on the beach, was deposited; this had the desired effect, my sorrow became loud and violent, and by the exertions of my friends, and the aid of reason, by degrees subsided.

“ Ifidora was magnificently interred by order of Alphonso, in the cathedral of Leon, and Isabella and himself honoured her memory with many a tear; some of the banditti being taken, so clearly exculpated

culpated me, that the king reversed my banishment, but he could not restore peace to a wounded mind; the infidels at this juncture, penetrated into the very heart of Spain, I intreated a command, I sought death on all sides, but he fled before me, desperate valour insured me victory, and careless of life, I gained continual triumphs, having driven the Moors back, far beyond their usual boundaries, and established peace upon sure grounds; I returned to Leon, Alphonso and Isabella received me as a long lost brother, they offered me every enjoyment of wealth and dignity, but they had no charms for me, the memory of Isidora was my only treasure, I closed the eyes of my father in peace, and smoothed the last hours of his mortal existence, I saw his remains deposited in the tomb of our ancestors, and then, in spite of all opposition, I threw myself into a monastery, my friends still cherished me. Alphonso and his virtuous queen,

Ramirez

Ramirez, his Almeria, and Felicia de Carmo, often cheered my solitude; for some time, heaven denied an heir to Leon, but at length the prayers of Alphonso was heard. I bore thee Carlos to the baptismal font, I credibly promised in thy name, that thou shouldest endeavour to follow the wisdom and glory of thy father, and the excellencies of thy mother, preserved by almost a miracle from the slaughter of the wicked, I charge thee, child of providence, to fulfil the vow made in thy name, and give me by so doing, all the comfort I can taste, till my soul, unfettered from its mortal clay, shall rejoin the hovering spirits of my sainted Isidora, and my lamented friends." Carlos heaved a sigh, to the remembrance of the old man's sufferings, which so many years of intervening space, could not prevent his yet sensibly feeling, as the minister of his God, as the friend of his family; Carlos had ever been taught to love and respect him; but now what an additional

tional motive, he had been the friend of his father, he had fought by his side, was even venerated by him, love and respect were become too cold, he adored him, he looked upon him as a being of a superior order, and he vowed to conquer the tyrant, or fall beneath the ramparts of St. Joseph; they were yet at some distance from that place, when they saw a cloud of dust, advancing towards the right, and halted to know what occasioned it; loud shouts soon proclaimed it to be the Spanish army; but ah, what pain smote the bosom of Don Carlos, on observing, that they were the greatest part ready to drop with fatigue, that waggons filled with wounded and dying men followed them, that they were without baggage, tents, or general; Don Garcia led them, he informed the king, that Sancho had secretly gathered a large body of troops together, and aided by the African Moors, had fallen upon them in the night, that Don Alvarez had done, all a consummate general

neral could do, but wounded in the attempt, to cover their retreat, they apprehended had fallen into the tyrant's hands.

Don Carlos hung his head upon this intelligence, he understood the look of St. Pierre, though that worthy friend forbore to reproach him; but the hero soon roused in his breast, and drawing his sword, he called to his brave soldiers, told them he would be their general, and lead them against their foe, languor and fatigue were thought on no more, the name of Don Carlos operated like a charm, and crowds flocked to his standard.

Meantime the sorrowful Leonora saw a second time the walls of St. Joseph; the drawbridge and massy gates struck her soul with redoubled horrors. The recent deaths of Lorenzo and Isabel were still fresh in her memory; she still felt their grasp,

grasp, she seemed continually to see their airy form flitting before her imagination, and she was perceptibly ill when the governor received her from her guard. The mildness and excellency of Leonora's disposition was too generally known not to excite some compassion in those breasts that were not absolutely callous to every feeling. This governor therefore, though devoted to Sancho, yet felt it as much his duty to treat Leonora with respect and tenderness as to keep her his prisoner. He procured her medical aid, lodged her in a magnificent apartment, and treated her with every kindness. Leonora was grateful for those favours, and found her time pass more agreeably than when last within those walls. Neither Gonsalvez nor Sancho had been heard of since her arrival, and she began to hope something was working in her favour, but this calm was not of any long duration. She heard one morning a violent bustle in the fortress, and the door of her apartment suddenly opened,

opened, and Sancho presented himself before her. She gave an agonizing shriek, and put her hands before her eyes ; the tyrant stood for a moment, as if suspended by the shock his appearance had occasioned ; at length he said, Leonora, listen to me unimpassioned and calm, you well know I have twice saved you from the rash fury of De Carma ; I have always treated you with every consideration, and I have a right to demand some little concessions. The boasted army of Spain is no more, my brave partizans, an inferior number, have routed them before the very walls of Leon ; their general in chains awaits a rebel's fate, and Don Carlos in some obscure corner, sunk in inglorious ease, or pusillanimous grief, hides himself from the victor's wrath ; Gonsalvez pursues the flying foe, and I, impatient, am come to know my doom from you. Gonsalvez pleads a former promise given in a moment of despair, which makes him arbitrator of thy destiny ; but give me, sweet Leonora,

Leonora, but a distant hope that time will obliterate the remembrance of Don Carlos, and I will defend you to the last extremity; you shall govern all my future days, be still the queen of Leon, and abandon that wretched boy to his merited fate.

Leonora sat some minutes silent ere she could give vent to the contempt and abhorrence she felt; at last finding the tyrant presumed upon her silence, she boldly told him, she despised him and his offers; true to her plighted faith, and the love she bore Don Carlos, she was determined not all the tortures his cruelty could devise should shake her constancy. Sancho bit his lips, 'tis well, madam, if you have your resolve, I have mine; and we may find a means to tame this stubborn spirit.

This persecution of Leonora was renewed the next day, and her spirits could scarcely

scarcely sustain her drooping courage. A flourish of trumpets suspended their altercation, and a herald entering, hailed Sancho undisputed master of Spain. Leonora stood aghast.

Dread Lord, continued the herald, Gonsalvez comes crowned with the noblest wreaths of victory. We overtook last night the flying host of rebel Spaniards, Gonsalvez charged them dispirited and faint, they ill-sustained the attack, and Don Carlos fell beneath De Carma's sword. Leonora heard no more, she fainted in the arms of her women. Gonsalvez approached, he knelt before the feet of Sancho, and presented him the armour of Don Carlos, a certain trophy of success. Leonora revived to all the horrors of despair. The well-known armour, stained with the blood of her husband, were proofs that confirmed too strongly his death.

Gonsalvez,

Gonsalvez, when he had finished his relation, rose, and approaching Leonora, here then, said he, is the glorious reward of all the toils of De Carma; by your royal word, sire, I claim Leonora, and he attempted to lead her forth. She broke from him, and scarce knowing what she did, fell at the feet of Sancho, exclaiming, ah, pity and protect me from Gonsalvez. Sancho expected this appeal; he had long seen with envy the bravery of De Carma, and had feared that his unprincipled arrogance would one day or other turn upon him, and he determined to free himself at once from this formidable rival both in love and politics. Conformable to this intention he raised Leonora from the ground, and assured her, no one should controul her actions or inclinations. Gonsalvez first remonstrated in gentle terms on this violation of so sacred a promise, but finding Sancho resolute, he lost all patience, and fired with resentment, not only reproached but menaced him. Sancho's
eyes

eyes sparkled with rage, and he ordered the soldiers to seize the traitor, but Gonsalvez had a soul as great as that of Sancho. Their crimes had levelled all distinction, and he felt himself his equal. He drew his sword, and turning to the soldiers, the first man that dares to touch me meets his fate ; now, Sancho, if thou hast any courage left, if guilt and treachery has not enervated thy soul, come on, and meet me as a soldier ought, Sancho was too much irritated to reflect that the consequence might be fatal to him, he accepted the challenge, and their sparkling swords filled the beholders breasts with terror. Leonora hid her face in the bosom of her attendants, and every stroke conveyed a pang to her harassed soul, but the measure of Gonsalvez's guilt was complete, and that providence he had so long contemned, lifted its arm to punish, and to render the example still more striking, destined him to fall by the very man his crimes had helped to raise. Sancho's better fortune

tune prevailed, and De Carma fell; the sword had pierced his heart, and unprepared, he rushed into the presence of his Maker.

The trembling soldiers stood aghast at the command of their master; they dragged the still panting corpse from the sight of Leonora, who, faint, trembling, and appalled, scarce gave tokens of existence. Sancho left her to the care of her women, telling her he should expect some grateful effort in his favour. All night she was a prey to the most cruel horrors; the image of Don Carlos was incessantly before her; she wept his loss, and lamented her cruel destiny, which had not joined her fate to his. The morning brought no joy to her; she ordered her women to leave her, hoping that Sancho would not invade her sorrows, if he heard her wish for retirement. They all quitted her, but one, who lingered behind, and approaching her with a cautious step, dropped a billet at
her

her feet, and then hastily withdrew. What a relief to the care-worn soul of Leonora, who knew not she had a hope to rest on. In it were the following lines:

“ I am near you, fair Leonora, dressed in the habit of a soldier slain in battle, I entered undistinguished ; alone, and unsupported I cannot do much, but rest assured, all that mortal man can attempt, I will. You may trust the female that gives you this. From your ever devoted

PEDRO.”

At length, cried Leonora, there is some hope ; I know his enterprizing spirit, and he may aid me to escape. Ah, shade of my beloved Carlos, hover round thy wretched widow, and thou, all-righteous heaven, guide me to some asylum, where, far from the power of Sancho, I may devote myself to thy worship and the memory of Don Carlos.

All

All that day she was undisturbed by Sancho; but the next morning he arrogantly entered her presence; well, madam, said he, am I never to merit a smile from the woman I adore? Are those eyes always to be dimmed by sorrow? Alas; my lord, replied the wretched Leonora, I have cause for eternal sorrow. Ah, be generously just; convey me to some convent, where I may dedicate my days to grief, and heaven; and seek some happier, kinder, fair, to bless you willingly. No, on my soul, retorted he, your lovely scorn has more charms for me than all the blandishments of wanton love. He was proceeding, but a loud alarm interrupted his voice. Several soldiers burst open the door; arm, my lord, cried they, the Spaniards, reinforced by numerous bands, scale our tremendous battlements with furious ardour, almost more than human; the Moor Abdallah leads all the force of proud Grenada against the southern gate;

VOL. II.

M

haste

haste to save us, all hangs upon the moment.

Sancho turned furiously to Leonora, this storm is all for thee, relentless woman; hence, thou soft boyish love, I disclaim thy empire, welcome revenge, that, that shall stimulate my purpose, and Leonora shall not live to triumph over me; he raised the distressed victim in his arms, regardless of her shrieks, and carried her to the very staircase which she had formerly descended to escape. He called some of his attendants, and told them to tie that proud woman to the battlements in such a direction that the arrows of the enemy might reach her; a soldier caught her arm, she struggled to unloose his hold, but a well-known voice bade her fear nothing. Tyrant, he cried, behold the gods have heard the cries of innocence oppressed, turn and defend thyself from Pedro. Ah, Pedro, said Sancho, ingrate, art thou also combined against thy master's life? I disclaim thee,
answered

answered the gallant knight ; have at thee, tyrant, traitor. Sancho, and all his hasty rallied troops, pressed hard on Don Pedro. The alarms from without were violent ; loud shouts and mingled groans struck the affrighted ear, the undaunted Spaniards scaled the impregnable fortress. The besieged as courageously repelled the assault ; and success was a long time doubtful, but the resolute bravery of the troops of Leon, added to the skill and intrepidity of their leader, bore down all before them, and at the juncture when Don Pedro, fainting under his wounds, was dreading the fate of Leonora, a dreadful crash announced the bursting of the massy gates, and the triumphant cries of victory filled all the place.

Leonora had sunk to the ground, unable to support the conflict ; but the sound which struck the tyrant with dismay, gave her new courage, she started on her feet, but what language can describe her sensa-

tions ! what tongue exprefs her fudden tranfition from grief to joy, when, in the firft of her deliverers, ſhe beheld Carlos, him whoſe imaginary death had coſt her ſo many tears ! Sancho quitted his fallen enemy to encounter one ſtill more formidable. Don Carlos diſdained to parley ; he looked around, the place inſpired him with new courage ; in a tranſport of energy he exclaimed, tyrant, thy race is run ; here, even here, in this ſacred ſpot, I devote thy blood to expiate that of my murdered parents. Sancho felt an involuntary ſenſation of horror, but the avenging ſword of Alphonſo, guided by the hand of Carlos, pierced his guilty boſom, and he expired at his feet with a groan.

Unmindful of any other objects, the eyes of Don Carlos fixed upon Leonora, he caught her to his boſom in a tranſport of delight ; ah, my Leonora, ſaid he, forgive my impetuous jealouſy, forgive the exceſs of my love, and reign for ever partner of
my

my confidence and throne. Here, in this very spot, thy father preserved me from that villain's rage; and here I swear to repay the debt of gratitude tenfold towards his offspring.

Leonora wept, she reclined upon his arm, and joy was now nearly as fatal to her as terror had been before; but she did not forget the dying Pedro, she turned towards him, and, directing the attention of Don Carlos, said, behold the first deliverer of Leonora; without his aid your courage had been all in vain exerted. Don Carlos raised him in his arms, my friend, said he, look up and live, or Carlos must mourn in the midst of victory. Pedro faintly pressed his hand, is Leonora safe? said he. She knelt by the side of him, she pressed his hand to her lips, she dewed it with her tears. Thus honoured, thus lamented, articulated Don Pedro, how enviable would be my death, but I will strive

to live and pay such wonderful goodness with unremitting loyalty.

Don Carlos ordered him to be carried to an apartment, and the first surgeons in Spain to be employed in his cure; he led his Leonora from that abode of death and horror, and ordered the royal apartments, closed ever since the death of his father, to be prepared for her reception; all ranks crowded, without distinction, to behold their rightful lord, and the fair partner of his throne. Notwithstanding their fatigues, they received all with condescending goodness; the first of note that hailed their happiness, was St. Pierre, and the brave Moor Abdallah.

Leonora, instructed by Carlos that St. Pierre was the chosen friend of both their fathers, fell at his feet with pious transport; the good old man raised her with tears of joy; let me now, said he, retire to my

my holy cell, let me sink gently to eternal rest, for all my worldly wishes are complete; live, blest pair, live for each other, free from the tempestuous storms of wayward fortune, happy in yourselves, happy in a whole people's love, and making their welfare the study of your lives. Remember, Don Carlos, an old man's counsel, let not sloth and luxury enervate thy soul, and make thee neglect the duty of a king; his is no common care, for he has the lives and safety of a whole nation committed to his charge; let your private example set before your subjects a model worthy of imitation; let your conduct, as husband, father or friend, be alike able to bear the test of examination; let your public character be mild, generous, and inflexibly just; remember that Alphonso, because the law demanded it, banished the friend his heart had chosen; he banished me, nor did I murmur; never reject the poor, nor let the oppressed cry in vain; trust not their petitions to indolent, or interested

interested men, but leave them for your own examination; keep persons to aid you in the discharge of public duty; but warned by the conduct of the proud Gonzalvez, be your own minister; endeavour to live at peace with all mankind, but in order to do so, be always prepared for war; at the first shadow of insult, display your force, but by the mildness of your measures, give your adversaries an opportunity of preserving that peace it is equally your interest to maintain; this conduct will cause you to be equally feared and respected; men will dread you as an enemy, and covet you as an ally; prosperity and peace will crown your ripening years with their choicest blessings, and, by a steady perseverance in well doing, you will be blest by God and man; above all, avoid flattery, shun its insidious arts, and repel its gilded baits, a frown, a reproof, will check the poison in its infancy, which once imbibed, grows on the delighted senses, till it becomes necessary
to

to the very existence, and deforms the noblest work of God, by making it the tool of art; and you, lovely Leonora, gentle and amiable, endowed with nature's choicest gifts, be thine the task to sooth the cares of state, politics are not a lady's theme; but your endearing sweetness will vary the tedious hours, and your tender friendship sooth the thorns, fate often strews upon the royal pillow; may your future progeny, taught by you, rise, in process of time, even beyond their father's; may the red cross wave over the proud minnarets, and Spain delivered, bless her indulgent God; may her adventurous sons, borne on the lofty billows, visit the remotest shores, and teach the savage nations that a God exists. Fired with these hopes, my soul renews her strength, my aged sinews, my contracted joints expand; it is joy, it is bliss unutterable, and all I ever felt of woe, expires in the gay vision.

After

After a few days of rest, during which Don Carlos placed the fortress of St. Joseph in proper security, and with pious care, collected the remains of his unfortunate parents, from the dreary cell where the Countess de Mendoza was once cruelly confined, they began to think of visiting Leon; Leonora would not hear of Don Pedro being left behind; but caused him to be carried in a litter, close to her own; such care, and the strong assurances of love and esteem, from both Don Carlos and his queen, operated like a rich balm, and his wounds were pronounced curable; he recovered after some space, and though his mind ever retained a deep sense of its sufferings, and the shocking death of the vile Aurelia, yet he grew in time more reconciled to life, and lived to a good old age, respected by friends, who really esteemed him, and beloved by dependants whom he studied to make happy. St. Pierre, full of years and holiness, had his dying moments cheered.

cheared by the presence of his royal friends, and he was entombed with the remains of his beloved Isidora; the Moor Abdallah, who owed life and liberty to Don Carlos, retired to his own estate, and whilst he lived, maintained a firm peace with the king of Spain; but his sons, disregarding their father's obligations, revolted immediately after his death, and began to make depredations; Don Carlos marched against them, defeated them in many battles, and added Valencia to the dominions of Spain; he lived long and happily with his beloved Leonora, who, from her first public entry into Leon, after the death of Sancho, had conciliated the affections of all his subjects; the Countess de Mendoza saw every wish of her heart completed, and unable to bear any more separations, resided constantly with her beloved children; the Countess de Carma took the veil at St. Adeline, and Alvarez (who had escaped the rage of Sancho's pursuit) and the faithful Victoria were amply rewarded,

rewarded, for their attachment and loyalty. The sorrows of Spain ceased, when her sons became just ; arts and commerce revived their drooping heads, the vines and olives flourished, and a long and prosperous peace, succeeded by a glorious and successful war, convinced the thinking part of mankind, that a deviation from the laws, established upon principles of humanity, justice and policy, and administered by a just and good monarch, can be productive only of discord, anarchy, distress and ruin ; whilst, on the contrary, a firm support of those inestimable blessings, and setting a proper value on them, as the gifts of heaven, is the only means by which we can merit their continuance, and ensure our own happiness, and the future good of our posterity.

F I N I S.